

L E T T E R S

TO A

Y O U N G L A D Y,

ON

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

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USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS



*H. Andrews*

L E T T E R S

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as*

TO A

YOUNG LADY,

ON A VARIETY OF

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS,

CALCULATED TO

IMPROVE THE HEART, TO FORM THE MANNERS,  
AND ENLIGHTEN THE UNDERSTANDING:

IN TWO VOLUMES:

BY THE REV. JOHN BENNETT, *H*

*Author of Strictures on Female Education.*

"That our Daughters may be as polished Corners of the Temple."

---

THE SECOND EDITION.

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VOL. I.

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LONDON:

Printed for T. CADELL, Junior, and W. DAVIES,  
(Successors to Mr. CADELL) in the Strand.

M.DCC.XCV.

LETTERS

TO A

YOUNG LADY

IN A VARIOUS OF

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS

COLLECTED TO

IMPROVE THE MIND, TO FORM THE MANNERS

AND ENLIGHTEN THE CONSCIENCE

IN THE MIND

BY THE REV. J. H. W. DAVIES



THE SECOND EDITION

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LONDON:

Printed by T. Cadell, Junr. and W. Davies,  
(Successors to Mr. T. Cadell, in the Strand.)

1804.

DEDICATION

loved its most illustrious

TO THE

trains and pointed oppo-

tion

Q U E E N.

To your own sex, in par-

ticular, you have exhibited

a most instructive and ani-

ating example. You have

MADAM,

**T**HE encouragement of every thing virtuous and laudable has been a distinguishing characteristick of your reign; and if licentiousness and vice have infested the kingdom, it is not because they have received any countenance from your

A 3 sovereign

vi DEDICATION.

sovereign authority, or even wanted its most salutary restraints and pointed opposition.

To your own sex, in particular, you have exhibited a most instructive and animating example. You have taught them, by a silent, but impressive language, to depend more for real influence and esteem, on the mild, the soft, and the attractive graces, than on all the perishable appendages of greatness, illustrious birth, political interference, or even the



DEDICATION.   vii

the dazzling splendours of a throne.

In an age, when artificial gaieties have almost banished the sweeter pleasures of simplicity and nature, you have displayed as great a fondness, as the necessary avocations of royalty would permit, for domestick retirement. Fashionable mothers might have derived a lesson from your conduct. Your royal breast has appeared to vibrate with a more exquisite delight, to the caresses of a tender offspring, in the shades of

viii DEDICATION.

Windsor, than it ever received from crowded levees, or the superbest brilliance of a court.

In a period of false refinement, when conjugal fidelity has not appeared a favourite virtue, your Majesty has been a model of as delicate an attachment, as ever graced the purest ages of antiquity, or occurs in the voluminous annals of the world. And in an era of fastidious affluence, when Christianity has been undermined by the subtilty of scepticks,

# DEDICATION. ix.

scepticks, and still more disgraced by the lukewarmness and irregularities of its professors; when its grand bulwark, the Christian Sabbath, has been daringly attacked, particularly amongst the higher ranks of people, by many kinds of licentious amusement, you have done every thing, in co-operation with our beloved Monarch, to stop the progress of the evil, that could result from virtuous precepts, or the unsullied lustre of example.

Amidst this *general* assem-

x DEDICATION.

blage of virtues, there is one point, however, in which your Majesty's character shines forth with *peculiar* lustre, and will command the grateful veneration of the most distant posterity. It is that, which is particularly enforced in this work, and so closely interwoven with the most essential interests of society — female education. This, your Majesty is allowed to have studied with greater earnestness, than any woman throughout your dominions; I may add, with better success. Your royal daughters are a daily,  
*living*



DEDICATION. xi

*living* comment on the excellence of your instructions, and are infinitely more celebrated for the graces of their hearts, the elegance of their manners, and the improvement of their understanding, than the magnificence of their family, or the splendour of their birth.

I cannot, therefore, but be deeply sensible of the high honour that was conferred on me, when your Majesty condescended to look into this work in manuscript, and give me the unreserved privilege of  
inscribing

xii DEDICATION.

inscribing it to your protection; and I would take a respectful leave of your Majesty with uttering an earnest wish, which, elevated as you are, must come near the heart—that the daughters, you have cultivated with such a tender assiduity, may long continue, (what they *are*,) the ornament of their sex—of their kingdom—of Europe—the prop, when she wants it, of their declining parent; your consolers in that awful moment, when even Majesty must be dust, and your companions in that heaven, where  
the

DEDICATION. xiii

the virtues will remain, though titles, and greatness and distinctions are forgotten!

I have the honour to be,  
with the most profound gratitude and respect,

M A D A M,

Your MAJESTY'S

most devoted Subject

and Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

DEDICATION

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rites, and pleasures and dis-  
turbances are forgotten!

I have the honour to be  
with the most profound re-  
spect and respect,

M A D A M

most devoted servant

and servant

THE AUTHOR



ADVERTISEMENT.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE following Letters have long lain by the author in a state of neglect;— indeed of uncertainty whether the publication of them would do any credit to himself, or service to the world. Nor does he think, that he should ever have presumed to expose them before the formidable tribunal of the publick, unless animated by the name of the

xvi ADVERTISEMENT.

very exalted and amiable personage to whom they are addressed.

---

If they deserve no fame, they ought, however, in his opinion, to be branded with no malignant or invidious censure, as their intention is really to serve the fairest and most amiable part of the creation; to rouse young ladies from a vacant or insipid life, into one of usefulness and laudable exertion — to recall them from visionary novels and romances into solid reading and reflection — and from the criminal absurdities of fashion, to the simplicity of nature, and the dignity of virtue. He has *attempted* a method of uniting, in their character, the graces with  
the

## ADVERTISEMENT. xvii

the virtues ; an amiable heart with elegant manners and an enlightened understanding ; and if he should not have succeeded, is, by no means, the first person who has misjudged 'his powers, "*qui magnis excidit ausis,*" and can reflect for his comfort, that laudable *projects* are perhaps the whole, that lies within the narrow circle, or the talents of the bulk of mortals.

## TABLE

# ADVERTISSEMENT.

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**CONTENTS.**

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This Work recommends, in the following  
Order,

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a List of proper Writers.*

II. *Polite Knowledge, as it relates to the  
Belles Lettres in general; Epistolary Wri-  
ting, History, the Lives of particular Persons,  
Geography, Natural History, Astronomy,  
Poetry, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture,  
Heraldry, Voyages, Travels, &c. with a  
Catalogue of, and Criticisms upon, the most  
approved Authors under each Article.*

III. *Ac-*



LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

To Miss LUCY .....

MY DEAR LUCY,

**T**HOUGH I myself have sustained an heavy loss by the death of your excellent mother, who lived so much in my friendship and esteem, and by her letters and society had conferred upon me some of the sweetest pleasures in human life, yet you alas! are the principal sufferer by this afflicting dispensation. It would give me the sincerest pleasure, if I knew how to alleviate your grief, or afford you a single moment's consolation.

VOL. I.

B

I need

I need not press on you the doctrines of religion. You have, doubtless, considered who it is, that has deprived you of this invaluable parent; a God of infinite wisdom, who never strikes, but at the fittest moment; a God of equal goodness, who, without the strongest reasons, would not afflict; and a being of unbounded power, who is abundantly able to make up your loss, and open to you a thousand sources of comfort.

Christianity should exclude all *unreasonable* sorrow. If we believe that our friends are dead in God; we know that this life is only a vapour; that our separation is but for a moment, and that we shall soon be restored to them in a world, where life is without pain, and where friendship is immortal.

Though you are, in the *literal* sense, an orphan, yet the number of friends, to whom you are so justly dear, will render your situation neither solitary, nor defenceless. The sensible, the elegant and the



the good will think themselves honoured by your acquaintance. They will give you credit for inheriting all the amiable qualities of a mother, who was revered, as far as known, whilst nature has so strongly imprinted, on your face, the resemblance of her features.

The scene is still fresh upon my memory, when, in her last moments, she so strongly recommended you to my protection. And though she paid a compliment to my abilities, which only a partial friendship could have excited, she did nothing more than strict justice to the warmth of my affection. I shall really think myself complimented by your correspondence. If you will call me father or brother, you will give an unusual lustre to my name. This fond heart shall vibrate to your wishes and your happiness: and, if you will occasionally visit my little cot, it shall put on all its loveliest charms, and smile in all its gayest attire, to receive so dear and so amiable

a stranger. The roses of my humble garden shall, if possible, be doubly sweet; my jessamines shall emit an unusual fragrance; and if nature will but obey, I will order the *general* scenery to be delightful.

We shall reap, I am assured, *mutual* benefits by this acquaintance. If I am able to communicate to you any little knowledge, you will more than repay it by that ease, delicacy, refinement, confidence, and expansion, which the mind never effectually feels, but in the friendship of a sensible and an interesting woman. Such a friendship is the richest cordial of life. Either of the sexes without it, are never what they should be. Like the best figures, *mutilated*, they appear to disadvantage. Unnatural expedients may be tried to supply its place. Business, ambition, an *overstrained* prudence, or peculiar situations may lead us to deny ourselves so sweet a pleasure; but, in fact, all human projects and successes

cesses are *insipid* without it. They are roseless thorns, a winter without a spring. Pleasures have not their relish, and sorrow wants a bosom to recline on. Our manners have not their proper softness; our morals their purity, and our souls feel an uncomfortable void.

They, who talk degradingly of women, do not know the value of the treasure they despise. They have not sufficient taste to relish their excellencies, or purity enough to court their acquaintance. They have taken the portrait of *abandoned* women, and they think the features applicable to all.

The softer sex, it is certain, are exceedingly injured by their education. If they were, what they *should* be, they are those lights in the picture of human life, that are intended to cheer all its darkness and its shades.



## LETTER II.

**T**HE education of women is unfortunately directed rather to such accomplishments, as will enable them to make a noise and sparkle in the world, than to those qualities, which might insure their comfort here, and happiness hereafter. Boarding schools consult but little those domestick qualifications, which are confessedly the highest point of usefulness in your sex, and still less that solid piety and virtue, which alone, to an intelligent creature, can be the source of any real, heart-felt enjoyment.

Though religion is indispensibly necessary to *both* sexes, and in every possible character and station, yet a woman seems, more peculiarly, to need its enlivening supports, whilst her frame must be



be confessed to be admirably calculated for the exercise of all the tender and devout affections.

The timidity, arising from the natural weakness and delicacy of your frame; the numerous diseases, to which you are liable; that exquisite sensibility, which, in many of you, vibrates to the slightest touch of joy or sorrow; the tremulous anxiety you have for friends, children, a family, which nothing can relieve, but a sense of their being under the protection of God; the sedentariness of your life, naturally followed with low spirits or *ennui*, whilst we are seeking health and pleasure in the field; and the many, lonely hours, which, in almost every situation, are likely to be your lot, will expose you to a number of *peculiar* sorrows, which you cannot, like the men, either drown in wine, or divert by dissipation.

From the era, that you become marriageable, the sphere of your anxieties

and afflictions will be enlarged. The generality of men are far from acting on such strict principles of honour and integrity, in their connexions with you, as they would rigidly observe, in matters of a much more trivial importance. Some delight in sporting with your nicest sensibilities, and afterwards exposing, with an *illiberal* triumph, the fondness of a credulous and unsuspecting heart; others, from fashion merely, and to be called men of gallantry, will say a thousand civil things, and shew as many preferences, with no other view, than to amuse the moment, or acquire a fantastick, visionary honour. A third sort of men (yes it is possible that there should be *male* coquettes!) will do and say every thing to inspire you with fondness, and get possession of your heart, without proceeding to that explanation, which nature has intended to come from *us*, and which the delicacy of your sex, whatever you may *suffer*, will not permit

you

you to demand. Others, without any particular designs upon you, or improper attentions, (for attachments spring up *insensibly*, and are as possible in one sex, as the other,) may be too agreeable for your safety and repose, and leave you to a silent, heartfelt concern, which will prey *doubly* in proportion to its *concealment*—or even when the indissoluble knot of marriage is tied, and you have resigned every thing, till it comes to your name and person, it may be to a man of *mere* integrity, who knows nothing of those many, little, tender attentions, which involve so great a share of a woman's happiness—it may be to a person of great *ambition*, who has neither leisure nor inclination for soft, domestick scenes—it may be to a fashionable *Insipid*, who, for the sake of flirting with some elegant fair, and giving your *jealousy* the widest range, leaves your charms and the endearments of his *children* to perish in neglect—nay stakes,



perhaps, his very *last* thousand on the uncertainty of game, when the unhappy throw may consign both you and your helpless babes to poverty and ruin—or it may be to a person of a peevish, ill-natured, saturnine cast, *artfully* concealed, till he had you in possession, which no attentions can alter, no charms can sweeten, and no vivacity can cheer. Under these, or indeed any *other* distresses, religion is the only true and unfailing resource, and its hopes and prospects, the only solid basis of consolation. In your many, *solitary* moments, what can afford the mind so sovereign a relief, as the exercise of devotion to an all-present God? and, when domestick sorrows cluster upon you, which you cannot reveal to any friend on *earth*, what method have you left, but to pour them into the bosom of your father in *heaven*, who is confessedly the friend of the friendless, *always*



# YOUNG LADY.

H

always willing to hear their cries, and  
always able to protect.

The period, my dear girl, I trust,  
is distant, when such afflictions shall  
attack your glowing sensibility. They  
*may* come, however, when I am no  
more; when this tongue cannot give  
a word of comfort, nor these eyes drop  
a sympathizing tear. If they *should*,  
remember my advice, and let your  
friendship strew a few, purple flowers  
over the grave of

Your very faithful and

affectionate

## LETTER HE

**I** CONSIDERED devotion, in my last letter, only as an advantage for relieving solitude, or as the best resource under any afflictions. But it is, indeed, in itself one of the highest and most exquisite pleasures; opening the mind to the sublimest contemplations, expanding it with the most delightful hopes, and soothing all its powers with feelings and consolations, that are infinitely beyond the reach, the nature and the littleness of all human things.

There must be a thousand moments in the life of every person, that is not elevated by this devotion, when all earthly blessings will be cold and insipid, and the soul must feel an inexpressible languor, though possessed of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them.

Though

Though some *fanatics* have made the love of God ridiculous by couching it in too sensual, rapturous, or extravagant language, yet such a passion there is, grounded on the most *rational* principles, and springing from the *purest* source; without which our lives would frequently be miserable, and our duties, the formal, unanimated service of a body without a soul.

If we admire what is great, sublime and magnificent, on *other* occasions; if we love what is amiable, disinterested, benevolent and merciful in many of our fellow-creatures, whom we have never seen, what principle either of reason or philosophy forbids us to *admire* and *love* the same in God, who is the primary author of *all* amiableness, and at once the source and *fulnes*s of all possible perfection; and, if we acknowledge him as the parent of all real happiness, where is the absurdity of cultivating an intercourse and *friendship* with him, in order

to

to obtain that happiness, by prayer, reflection, and pious aspirations?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul: This is the *first* and *great* commandment.

If a virtuous attachment to an imperfect creature here is attended with such transports; if friendship, pure and disinterested, has such exquisite enjoyments, the pleasure resulting from an intimacy with God must far surpass all human comprehension, and be infinitely more exalted and sublime. It is heaven compared with earth, or the immensity of space, with the little, narrow boundaries of a prison, or a convent.

#### LETTER IV.

**N**EVER fancy, that religion will render you gloomy, or unpleasing. If indeed you take it from the coarse daubings



daubings of superstition or of enthusiasm, it is a frightful monster, or a melancholy spectre, that will discourage people from approaching you. If you deduce it from the scriptures, and ground it upon reason, solid argument and truth, it will become a source of perpetual chearfulness to yourself, that will be reflected on every person and object about you.

Never fail to treat, with the greatest reverence, every thing, that relates to the house of God, to his ministers, to his sacraments, and to his word. To mention any thing, that is sacred, with *levity*, is a certain mark of a depraved heart, and a weak understanding. A witty sneer or sarcasm, on such subjects, is not to be forgiven. It shocks all the sensible and better part of mankind, and is a species of blasphemy or *sacrilege*.

You remember who has said, that "every woman is at heart a rake." This sentence is severe, and not to be admitted

mitted without restrictions. Pope was a rancorous satyrift of women. Whatever be his merit in the world of letters, *they*, at least, owe no extraordinary gratitude to his memory or talents. "Tread lightly upon the ashes of the dead," is a maxim, I revere. I would, otherwise, retaliate his insults on the sex, and become the champion of their injured honour. I would insinuate, that the poet was little and deformed, and had experienced few of their careffes or attentions. Other writers, however, have charged you with a strong preference for *dissipated* men. But this, surely, is the ungenerous aspersi-  
on of enemies, or of those, who have not known the most deserving amongst you, and have formed an unjust and unfavourable conclusion, from the unamiableness of a few.

Your example, I trust, will always contradict such *indiscriminate* censure. The idea, if we could admit it in its full extent,

tent, would be unfriendly to the social happiness of life. It would destroy that esteem and confidence in your virtues; which the best and wisest men have uniformly thought no inadequate counterpoise to their sorrows, and their cares. A bad *man* is terrible in society; but an unprincipled *woman* is a *monster*. The peace, happiness and honour of *our* sex are so very much in the power of *yours* after marriage, that the most abandoned libertine shudders at the thought of an union with a woman, who has not piety and virtue. His intimacy with some females, of a *certain description*, has given him such a disgusting picture, as will never be forgotten. In his moments of reflection, he execrates his folly, and, when he deliberates, whom he should chuse for the companion of *his* life, appeals from the treacherous, *ruffled* bosom of an harlot, to one, that will be always faithful and always serene. Without *piety*, indeed, a woman can never fully possess  
the

the true powers of pleasing. She will want that meek benevolence, sympathy and softness, which give an inexpressible *lustre* to her features, and such a wonderful ascendancy over our affections. We shall not *otherwise* approach her with confidence, or dare to repose any of our secrets, our concerns, or our sorrows, in her sympathizing breast.

## LETTER V.

MY DEAR GIRL,

**I**F your mind is in a proper frame, every thing in you and about you will inculcate the necessity, and prompt you to the continual exercise of devotion. You will find yourself encompassed with innumerable fears, weaknesses, wants, sorrows, diseases, wishes, hopes, under which all human creatures will be unable to assist,

or



or give you any adequate relief; but wherever you cast your eyes, you will, at the same time, be invironed with the immensity of a Being, who is possessed of all possible perfections, and who holdeth the issues of life and death, of happiness and misery, solely in his hands.

The power, majesty, grandeur, and wisdom of this Being are discernible in every part of your frame, in every function of your body, and operation of your mind, nay, in the curious and exquisite formation of every animal and insect. They are seen, on a still *sublimier* scale, in the size, the distances, grandeur, and wonderful revolution of the heavenly bodies; in the beautifully variegated canopy of heaven, in all the delicious landfkips of nature, in the pleasing succession of day and night, spring and autumn, summer and winter. In short, winds and storms, thunder and lightning, earthquakes and volcanos, the grand, magnificent ocean, waves and comets, fulfilling his word,  
appearing

appearing and receding, at his sovereign command; flowers, blossoms, fruits, fossils, minerals, petrefactions, precipices, hills, caverns, vallies, *all* tell you, that their former is immensely magnificent, “that he doeth what he will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and that none can withstand the thunder of his power.”

This God then is *able* to gratify your wishes, and support you under all your sufferings; he has *wisdom* enough to protect and guide you; the question then is; is he *willing*? On this head, hearken to all nature, for it speaks aloud. Look through the numberless orders and gradations of animals, insects, nay the meanest reptiles, and you will be astonished with the attention, that has been lavished on them, in the contrivance of their frame, the allotment of their situation, and the provision made for their continual support. *They are happy.* Shift your eye to all the *inanimate* creation, and

and you will find it a scene of harmony, of order, and beauty, and seemingly constructed for our *gratification*. Lovely, picturesque views delight our imagination; shrubs and plants and flowers regale us with aromatick smells. But a poet, of very descriptive talents, shall speak on this occasion;

Wherefore nature's form

So exquisitely fair? her breath perfum'd

With such ethereal sweetness? whence her voice,

Inform'd at will, to raise or to depress

Th' impassion'd soul, and whence the robes of light,

Which thus invest her with more lovely pomp,

Than fancy can describe? whence, but from Thee,

O source divine of never failing love,

And thy unmeasur'd goodness? not content

With ev'ry food of life, to nourish man,

Thou mak'st all nature, beauty to his eye,

Or musick to his ear; well pleas'd he scans

The goodly prospect, and with inward smiles,

Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain,

Beholds the azure canopy of heav'n,

And living lamps, that overarch his head

With more than regal splendor, lends his ears

To the full choir of water, air, and earth.

In ev'ry part

We trace the bright impressions of his hand,

In earth, or air, the meadow's purple stores,

The

The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin form,  
 Blooming with rosy smiles, we see pourtray'd  
 That *uncreated* beauty, which delights  
 The mind supreme—

Indeed, if you *reason* for a moment, why could the Almighty create at all, but to *diffuse* and variegate enjoyment? Inexhaustible source of happiness, from all eternity, he needed not, and, in fact, could not receive, an *addition* to his *own*. In himself supremely blessed, fountain of eternal majesty and splendour, adored by seraphs, surrounded by myriads of angels and archangels, what dignity could *be* derive from the *existence*, or services of man, who is but a worm, or the production of ten thousand worlds? It was infinite wisdom, therefore, that sketched out the plan of universal nature, and *all-communicative* goodness, that had so many worlds exist, and had them to be *happy*. The supreme and gracious former wished to communicate some scattered rays of

his



his glory and his blessedness to this extended world of matter and of life, and has therefore replenished every leaf, every drop of water, and every possibility of space with shoals of inhabitants; for

Scarce buds a leaf, or springs the lowest weed,  
But little flocks upon its bosom feed;  
No fruit, our palate courts, or taste, our smell,  
But on its fragrant bosom, nations dwell.

Is it not then a certain conclusion, that he created you, as well as all *inferior* animals for happiness? On *this* you may depend, as much as you can, upon the *certainty* of your existence, and that he is always more *willing* to be your protector, than you are ready to request it.

Open the *sacred book*, and, from beginning to end, it will confirm this opinion, and exalt your ideas of the divine perfections. “I delight in exercising  
“loving kindness, saith the Lord. The  
“Lord is good to all, and his tender  
“mercies

“mercies are over all his works. If he  
“clothes the grafs of the field, which, to  
“day, is, and to-morrow is cast into the  
“oven, how much more shall he clothe  
“you, O ye of little faith?” *That* reli-  
gion is built on *wrong* notions, or a *me-*  
*lancholy* temper, that fills us with *imaginary*  
terrors. All nature breathes a language  
of hope and mercy. And *nature* is the  
messenger of God.

It is true there is *evil* in the world, as  
well as good; there are marks of *judgment*,  
as well as mercy. There are hurricanes,  
as well as fanning breezes; *noxious* are  
intermixed with useful animals; *poisonous*  
and salutary herbs grow *beside* each other,  
and roses have their thorns. There are  
wars and rumours of wars; there are  
earthquakes, that desolate *whole* countries;  
a thousand forms of disease; a thousand  
modifications of sorrow, anxiety, death.  
If he, who sits at the helm, be so gra-  
cious, whence all this disorder? If his  
infinite

infinite power be combined with equal wisdom and goodness, why did he not prevent it?

If men were to be free agents, the *total* prevention of sin and evil seems an *impossibility*. Moral *liberty* could not consist with a *mechanical*, forced obedience; and if we had *not* been free, the idea of punishments or rewards, of an heaven or an hell, would be the greatest of all possible absurdities. So that the question *ultimately* amounts to this, whether it was proper for the Almighty to create such a world at all? Had we not better reserve the propriety of this conduct to be disputed with him, at his great tribunal? *There*, I doubt not, we shall be amply convinced, that the creation was a work of infinite *mercy*, as well as power, and that a greater degree of *happiness* than misery has arisen from it. There too, when we are able to discern with *glorified* eyes, the whole chain of causes and effects, from the beginning, to the end, of

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time; the dependence of one link of being on another, and of worlds on worlds; this evil we now complain of, may become a means of exalting our ideas of the attributes of the Almighty; and we shall blush at ourselves for even having questioned his goodness for a moment, or encouraged a reasoning pride, so ill becoming creatures, whose days are few, whose strength is weakness, whose wisdom, folly; and who, in the present *immurement* of their understanding, scarcely know the nature of a blade of grass, or of the very pebbles, on which they tread.

This question concerning the *origin* of evil has puzzled the whole tribe of reasoners and philosophers, from the creation, to the present moment. The scripture alone has solved the enigma to our satisfaction. This *deranged* state of things is the providential punishment of guilt, but, at the same time, contrived in mercy, as a salutary regimen, and as a mode of purifying fallen creatures for the innocence  
and



and happiness of a better world. It is a *chaos*, fitted to our *present* constitution, and will refine, as *we* do, into its primitive beauty and splendour. "There shall  
" then be new heavens and a new earth,  
" wherein dwelleth righteousness. The  
" wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the  
" leopard lie down with the kid, when the  
" earth is full of the knowledge of the  
" Lord, as the waters cover the seas."  
Resignation, in the mean time, has a balm for suffering, and the faith of a christian "looketh to a better country,  
" with foundations, whose builder and  
" maker is God."

But speculations apart, if you draw nigh to the Almighty, he will draw nigh to you; if you seek his favour and friendship, all things shall work together for your good. Tribulation, anguish, nakedness, or famine, or peril, or the sword will all be so many instruments, in his hands, of procuring your eternal happiness and glory.

Remember the gift of his only Son to be a sacrifice for your sins, and it is more than a thousand lessons of a mercy beyond a parallel, and that far exceeds all human comprehension.

On so delightful a subject, it is difficult to stop one's pen, or restrain the sallies of imagination. This idea of the Supreme Being casts a delicious fragrance over all the real enjoyments of life. It gives an inexpressible poignancy to friendship, and to the affection, with which I shall ever feel myself inviolably your's.

#### LETTER VI.

MY DEAR GIRL,

**D**EVOTION, considered simply in itself, is an intercourse betwixt us and God; betwixt the supreme, self-existent, inconceivable spirit, which form-

ed and preserves the universe, and that particular spirit, with which, for awful reasons, he has animated a portion of *matter* upon earth, that we call man. It is a silent act, in which the soul divests itself of *outward* things, flies into heaven, and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt or pleasures, into the bosom of an *almighty* friend.

Though this devotion, in its first stages, may be a wearisome or *insipid* exercise, yet this arises merely from the depravity of nature, and of our passions. A little *habit* will overcome this reluctance. When you have fairly entered on your journey, “the ways of this wisdom will  
“be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths,  
“peace.”

True devotion, doubtless, requires a considerable degree of *abstraction* from the world. Hence *modern* christians treat it as a *vision*. Hence many *modern* writers have little of its unction. But it glows

in the scriptures. It warms us in the fathers. It burned in an Austin, and in many other of those persecuted martyrs, who now are with God.

That we *bear* little of it, is not wonderful. It makes no noise in the circles of the learned or of the elegant. Under an heap of worldly cares, we *smother* the lovely infant, and will not let it breathe. Vanity, ambition, pleasure, avarice, quench the celestial fire. And these, alas! are too much the god of *mortals*! Ever since the world began, writers have been amusing us only with *shadows* of this piety, instead of giving us its *soul* and *substance*. Superstition has placed it in opinions, ceremonies, austerities, pilgrimages, *persecution*, an august temple, or splendid imagery, which had little connexion with sentiment or spirit. Enthusiasm has swelled with *unnatural* conceptions, and obtruded a *spurious* offspring on the world, instead of this engaging child of reason and truth; whilst



whilst the lukewarm have rested in a few outward duties, which have had no vigour, and, as they sprung not from the heart, never entered the temple of the Most High.

Real piety is of a very different, and of a much more *animated*, nature. It looks up to God, sees, hears, feels him, in every event, in every vicissitude, in all places, in all seasons, and upon all occasions. It is theory, vivified by experience. It is faith, *substantiated* by mental enjoyment. It is heaven, transplanted into the human bosom. It is the radiance of the Divinity, warming and incircling man. It is *spiritual* sense, gratified by *spiritual* sensations. Without *this*, all *ceremonies* are inefficacious. Books, prayers, sacraments and meditations are but a body, without a soul, or a statue, without animation.

That man is *capable* of such an intercourse with his Maker, there are many *living* witnesses to prove. Without hav-

ing recourse to the visions of fanaticks, or the dreams of enthusiasts, it may be proved to spring from natural and *philosophical* causes. God is a spirit; so is the mind. *Bodies* can have intercourse; so can *souls*. When minds are in an *assimilating* state of purity, they have union with their Maker. This was the bliss of *paradise*; sin interrupted, and holiness must restore it. To a soul, thus disposed, the Creator communicates himself, in a manner, which is as insensible to the natural eye, as the falling of dews, but not less refreshing to its secret powers, than *that* is to vegetation.

The primitive saints are describing this, when they speak of their transports. David felt it, when he longed for God, as the hart panteth after the water brooks. St. Paul knew it, when he gloried in his tribulations. It was *embodied* in him, when he was carried up into the third heavens, and heard things, impossible to be uttered. St. Stephen was filled with it, when

when he saw the heavens open, and prayed for his murderers. By it, martyrs were supported, when they were stoned, and fawn asunder. And till we feel it in ourselves, we shall never fully know, how gracious the Lord is.

If you can acquire this spiritual *abstraction*, you will, at once, have made your fortune for eternity. It will be of little moment, what is your lot on earth, or what the distinguishing vicissitudes of your life. Prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, honour or disgrace, a cottage or a crown, will all be so many instruments of glory. The whole creation will become a *temple*. Every event and every object will lead your mind to God, and in his greatness and perfections, you will insensibly lose the littleness, the glare and tinsel of all human things.

If I wished only to set-off your *person* to the greatest advantage, I would recommend this true *sublimity* of religion. It gives a pleasing serenity to the countenance,

nance, and a chearfulness to the spirits beyond the reach of art, or the power of affectation. It communicates a real transport to the mind, which dissipation mimicks only for a moment; a sweetness to the disposition, and a *lustre* to the manners, which all the airs of modern politeness study but in vain. Easy in yourself, it will make you in perfect good humour with the world; and when you are diffusing happiness around you, "you will only be  
 "dealing out the broken fragments, that  
 "remain after you have eaten."

#### LETTER VII.

**T**HIS devotion, however, though *essentially* a silent intercourse betwixt the soul and God, yet, to creatures, consisting of *matter*, as well as spirit, must be nourished by *external* forms. It must  
 strike



strike the senses, in order to awaken the imagination.

The *bulk* of people, indeed, are so far *materialized*, (if I may thus express it,) and sunk in *sense*, that nothing but outward ceremonies would give them any adequate perception either of the *necessity* or pleasures, of devotion; and even the most *spiritual*, in a state of frailty, will need these powerful calls and lessons to *re-trace* the vanishing impressions of their duty.

Publick worship and the sacraments are the grand *outwork* of piety. They are the *doors*, by which we enter the sanctuary of God. They are the channels for conveying heavenly grace and vigour to the soul. It is here the Redeemer gives us food, that nourishes to eternal life. It is here he rains down fountains of living water.

Whoever pretends to be *above* these forms, is the *fanatick*, who might as well tell us, that his animal life can be supported without food; whoever despises

them, is the Infidel, that does every thing in his power, to root out the remembrance of God from the earth, and violate the dearest interests of mankind. Whoever *conscientiously* attends, yet considers them, only as *introductory* to good, is a true, rational christian, that unites the separate links of matter and spirit, and lets his light shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father, who is in heaven.

Lukewarmness, an insensibility to all sacred things, scepticism, profligacy, and licentious pleasures are the discriminating traits of those, who neglect, from whatever vain pretences, these means of grace. The best disposed are gradually hardened, and the poor are plunged into such disorders, as bring them to the fatal tree.

## LETTER VIII.

ANOTHER excellent method of in-kindling piety, is *reading the scriptures*. A christian, indeed, should have this sacred book ever folded in his breast. There is a richness and a comfort in it, that nothing else can equal. Every word is big with instruction; every sentence is divine. It is a mine, perpetually opening; the deeper we dig, the richer is the ore. It is a feast, adapted to *every* taste; the most exalted understanding must admire, and the *lowest* cannot fail to comprehend, its instructions.

If people only read for the sake of *entertainment*, where can they find a book equal to the Bible? What other production, either ancient or modern, has such  
striking

striking passages of the pathetick and sublime, the vehement and impassioned? Where are there such lofty images, such grand conceptions, or such picturesque and animated descriptions, as in the psalms? There is scarcely a person in the world, to whose case some of them are not adapted, nor a sorrow which they cannot soothe. In one part, plaintive, affecting, penitential; in another full of triumph and exultation, ennobling, elevating; here describing the immensity, majesty, omnipotence and omnipresence of God; there the littleness of the world, and the vanity of man; whoever can read them without emotion, must be pronounced void both of piety and taste.

The prophets are the true *sublime* of holy reading. The bold images, metaphors, allusions and descriptions, with which they abound, have been the admiration of the most accomplished scholars, orators and critics in the world. The proverbs of Solomon and the book of Eccle-



Ecclesiasticus are an excellent system for the government of private life, as well as a fund of spiritual instruction. They have all the *marrow* of our *modern* systems of good breeding, without any of their *poison*. The sacred stories of the scripture are related with amazing simplicity and pathos; the parables are beautifully pointed and instructive; and the epistles of St. Paul are a model of the sublimest and most energetick eloquence, that can be found in any age, or in any language.

When the immortal Locke and Newton had dived into every *other* kind of knowledge, they sat down to contemplate the vanity and poverty of all, in the richness of the scriptures. The famous Bacon, an oracle of learning, in his day, and the wonder of all succeeding ages, confessed them to be the source of all *real wisdom*. The illustrious Selden, on his death-bed assured archbishop Usher, that the *whole* of his immense library could not give him  
4 half

half the comfort, which he derived from one *single* sentence of the inspired writings; and Addison, whose name must be ever dear to every friend of religion and virtue, spent no little time in collecting together, and arranging into one common point of view, the united evidences of the christian religion.

The primitive christians used to read this book, on their knees. Their preface was, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wonderous things of thy law." Imitate them on earth, and in *time* you shall join that illustrious choir of saints, that are continually worshipping before the throne in heaven.

LETTER

## LETTER IX.

**T**HE old Scriptures may appear, in themselves, dry and insipid; but when you consider them, as *typical* of the new, and affording a strong, collateral testimony to the truth of revelation; as describing the circumstances, manners, and anecdotes of a peculiar, chosen people, whose history, rebellion, captivity and dispersion are interwoven with the whole system of christianity, you will read them with a greater relish, and more godly edification.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the apostles and prophets; all the incidents you read, point to him, as their origin, and as their end; "the great corner-stone  
" in Zion; the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The

The bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, is an image of *our* captivity to sin, and their deliverance, of our redemption through the blood of Christ; their journeying through the wilderness, is a strong picture of our wearisome passage through this vale of tears. Moses is the Saviour, making waters of comfort gush from the stony rock; the manna is the food of his word, and the waters are the graces of his holy spirit; the beautiful and affecting history of Joseph is an emblem of that better personage, who was envied, hated, persecuted and murdered by his brethren, for the general salvation: Abraham is a striking image of the Almighty, offering up his only son; and all the *ceremonies* of the law point to that true *blood* of sprinkling, which alone can take away the sins of the world. Thus is *every* page holy; thus do you tread, every moment, on consecrated ground, and thus every word, when *properly* understood, is spirit and is life.

But



But of *all* the scriptures, the gospels are certainly the most edifying and instructive. They are plain, forcible, spiritual; they come from the very mouth of holiness and wisdom, and do not admit of any wrong constructions or doubtful interpretations. If there was only the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel extant, we should have an incomparable abridgement of christianity, sufficient to direct our faith, to animate our practice, and flash confusion on that host of writers, who have built so many wrong and dangerous opinions on the pretended basis of revelation.

Commentators may serve to explain an eastern custom, ceremony, allusion or mode of expression, but I cannot in general, recommend them; at least to young people. They embarrass more frequently, than they direct; they have often perplexed, what, in itself, was clear, and darkened, where they affected to illuminate. The sayings of our Lord are  
so

so very obvious, as to need little, or no explanation. They are a precious wine, which the profane wisdom of scholars and philosophers has mixed with water. If men had only studied them with earnestness, instead of their own interests, prejudices and passions, we should never have been distracted with so many systems of error and superstition.

Do not read much, at a time. Meditation is the stomach, which digests this food; you should *reflect* many hours, for reading *one*. And there is such a condensed richness in the scriptures, that one single verse will often suggest an ample fund for serious contemplation.

Every moment that you peruse this book, consider yourself as in the immediate presence of your Maker. Fancy that you heard him, delivering the commandments, in all the thunder and lightning of the mount. Remember that, though heaven and earth fail, one jot or one tittle shall, in no wise, pass from the law,

law, till all be fulfilled. Consider what a number of holy men have sealed the truth of this testimony with their blood. Examine yourself by the promises and threatenings, as you go along; and do not forget to bless God, upon your knees, that he has given you such a lamp for your feet, and such a light to your paths.

Without this sacred volume, the world would have been, at this very moment, considerably unenlightened; worshipping stocks or stones, perhaps offering human blood, and tormenting themselves with burdensome ceremonies, that had no manner of connexion with the heart; immersed in sorrows, which they could not have eased, and perplexed with a thousand gloomy enigmas, which they never could have solved. The light, which superficial scepticks vaunt, as that of *nature* or philosophy, is, in a great degree, derived from the scriptures. The arguments,

arguments, which they level against christianity, have been suggested by the light of christianity itself.

### LETTER X.

**T**HOUGH I have reprobated *prolix* commentators, there are, however, several little books, which will illustrate and enliven the sacred writings, and enable you to read them with greater pleasure and advantage. Melmoth, on the beautiful and sublime of scripture, falls under this description. He will suggest some striking passages, which before may have escaped your observation.

The Comtesse de Genlis is intitled to the gratitude of all young people. She is possessed of an elegant taste, a splendid style, and a very enlightened understanding. She has thrown into a dramatick form,



form, several of the historical parts of the Bible; and though the chastity of an English taste is not easily reconciled to seriousness "in so questionable a shape," her ingenuity sparkles through the whole performance, and has given it a pathos, an *interest* and a brilliancy, that will both improve your heart, and delight your imagination.

I scarcely know a woman, that deserves so much from the community at large, as Mrs. Trimmer. Her sacred History is a well known, useful performance; her unwearied labours for the service of the poor, in her *Family Magazine*, and her active patronage of Sunday Schools, bespeak an heart, that is warm with benevolence, and an understanding of no ordinary size. The pride of philosophy and profound learning may, perhaps, look down on such attempts, as beneath their ambition. But how can talents be so usefully, or so amiably employed, as when, stripped of their gaudy plumage, they condescend

condescend to instruct, to bless and reform the meanest of mankind. *Metaphysical* reasonings are for the *learned few*, and often mislead *them*; these *practical* labours consult the good of *millions*, and will continue to edify, when all such cobweb systems are totally demolished, and their authors consigned to the oblivion, they deserve.

There is not, perhaps, a better method of turning scripture to advantage, than that used by the good bishop Wilson, in his *Sacra Privata*. He selects a few, detached verses, and, in his natural and easy style, raises upon *each*, a train of reflexions, which must inkindle and animate the devotion of every reader.

Doddridge's paraphrase on the New Testament may be justly recommended for its zeal, piety, earnestness and animation. Nor does it want the embellishments of a lively fancy, or of an easy and unadorned language. But, like most dissenters of his time, he was a  
pupil

pupil of the Calvinistick school; and though I shall never be a convert to his system, I cannot but approve the *general* air and spirit of his writings. There are few things or characters in life, any more than authors, that are formed to command an unreserved admiration. The most delightful landskip has its shades. The most animated countenance has frequently *some* feature imperfect, or distorted. There will be *accidental* heats and flushes on the most delicate complexion.

## L E T T E R XI.

**T**HERE are several, excellent manuals of private devotion. But I have no great opinion of these forms. Look into the history of your private life and the dispensations of Providence; to what is daily happening within you, and about you, and your own *heart* will be the best

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D

prayer

prayer book in the world. If you attend to its wishes, its breathings and its wants, you can never want *language*; or if you *should*, God is ever present and will accept the naked wishes of your soul. A *beggar*, in great distress, is always eloquent. His *sighs and tears* speak; he *feels* what he wants, and he needs no artificial arrangement of words. Still *babies* must be nourished with milk. There is a period in the *christian*, as well as the *natural*, life, when leading strings are necessary to the infant.

I have known people fall into a total *disuse* of private devotion, solely from a fancied poverty of words. This is a very dangerous error. Prayers, drawn from books, are surely preferable to no prayers at all. *Artificial* exercise is better than total inaction. But prayer of the heart is that superior glow, which arises from motion in the open air, and exhilarates us with a view of all the charming pictures and productions of nature.

As



As a public system of devotion, that of our church is excellent. How simple and energetick is the language! How rich and beautifully *varied*, are the collects! How unconfined and universal the prayers, extending to all conditions of men, situations of life, and comprizing every wish and sorrow of the heart. If other forms do not please your taste, you may contrive to adapt some portion of this to your private occasions.

Two *capital* traits will strike you in our liturgy; the great sacrifices, laid upon *Jesus Christ*, and the continual intercession, for the blessings of the *holy spirit*. These are, indeed, the grand lesson to be learned from it, as well as from the scriptures. They are the *pillars* of the church; the *life blood* of the christian system.

Without the atonement of Christ, criminals as we are, there never could have been any hope of mercy; without the assistance and graces of the spirit, we could not have been purified for the

mansions of glory. If Christ has been called the sun of righteousness, the holy spirit is the air, which purifies and invigorates the whole moral world, and preserves it from stagnation and putrefaction.

Meditate frequently on these sufferings of Christ, till you abhor every sin, that produced them; and in order to be enriched with all graces and blessings, pray daily and fervently for this holy spirit. The good Bishop Kenn has a few words, in one of his hymns, which wonderfully epitomize our petitions and our wants:

Direct, controul, suggest this day,  
All I design, or do, or say,  
That all my pow'rs, with all their might,  
In thy sole glory may unite.

## LETTER XII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

**Y**OUR sacred reading needs not to be wholly confined to the scriptures. A few, other serious books will assist your piety, as well as serve to *illustrate* and confirm the scriptures themselves.

I cannot, in this respect, so much recommend *modern* sermons, as some little, practical treatises of piety. English discourses in general, by a strange, scholastic mismanagement, are not sufficiently addressed to the *heart*. Either they are learned disquisitions, on some *speculative*, controverted subject, more calculated to display abilities, than to edify; or they

are spruce, moral essays, with little more of *christianity* in them, than might be gleaned from the works of Plato or Epic-tetus. They want that simplicity, fire, energy, animation, that boldness of images, appeal to the conscience, and that picturesque display of heaven and hell, which give such an unction to the writings of St. Paul, and of the fathers. They do not thunder and lighten at the sinner; they do not carry us, by a whirlwind, into heaven, and shew us thrones and sceptres; they convince, but they do not animate; they *glitter*, but they do not *warm*.

Ancient divines have more fire and matter. They studied the scriptures, more than *human* systems. "They were filled with the spirit;" they were men of watchfulness and prayers. A profane spirit of criticism, or of philosophy, falsely so called, makes *us* cold and languid. In pervading many learned or splendid  
pages,



pages, the heart is often left devoid of one pious emotion.

Many sermons, no doubt, are to be excepted from this censure. Those of Archbishop Secker contain a fund of solid matter, piety and instruction; but the *style* is rather singular and uncouth. The marble is rich, but it is unpolished. There is such a thing, as an elegant simplicity. Secker had a simplicity, without this elegance.

Few prelates, however, have deserved so well from the church, or posterity. The metropolitan, though placed in the bosom of a court, had neither pride, indolence, nor adulation. His vigilance was extraordinary; his labours unremitting, and his crozier but an imperfect emblem of the real pastoral zeal, "which eat up his soul." The present bishop of London has all the simplicity of his illustrious patron, tissued with that elegance, which the archbishop wanted. His ser-

mons have been *universally* read; they are written on a truly evangelical plan; and their object is, not merely to *amuse*, but to instruct and edify.

## LETTER XIII.

EVERY person should read the discourses of Sherlock, who wishes to see the grand doctrines of christianity properly illustrated, and inforced with equal energy of argument and language. Sherlock is one of the few, *original* writers of sermons. He is the Locke of divinity, who anatomizes the whole system, and displays its component parts.

Many authors glean all their matter from other books. He borrowed *his* from the scriptures and reflexion. He *thought* many hours, for *writing one*. If all

all men did the same, the press would not groan with such continual *abortions*.

Ogden's Sermons have very great, original merit. Perhaps I *miscalculated* them; they are, more properly, sketches on sacred subjects; on the fundamental articles of the christian faith. There is more vigour, and energy and conviction in one page of this writer, than in whole volumes of some others, who have received a much more general applause.

The doctor seems particularly to have studied conciseness, and his *miniature* plan sometimes leaves the features of his pieces indistinct. There is a singular abruptness in his transitions, and the mind is frequently obliged to pause, in order to discover the *invisible* connexion, and unite the, seemingly, broken chain of ideas. These discourses were, probably, in their *original* state, much more *diffuse*. He retrenched by degrees, and, as an ingenious,

French writer once said, "had leisure to be concise."

## LETTER XIV.

THERE is more popular eloquence, argument and pathos in Archbishop Tillotson, than in almost any ancient writer of sermons, that I recollect. But his works are much incumbered with the scholastick divinity of his age, and strangely perplexed with divisions and subdivisions. *Unity* of design is the beauty of all writings. A religious discourse should tend only to the enforcing of one *grand point*. This should, always, be kept in sight, and the way to it should be as direct, concise and simple, as possible. Divines of the last century spent more time in proving what was *self evident*, and illustrating it



it by learned quotations, than would have sufficed for inculcating some lesson of piety, that would never have been forgotten. Modern writers have judiciously corrected this mistake. They come more *immediately* to the point, and would think it as downright pedantry to amuse their hearers with a long list of writers, as to retail little scraps of Greek or Latin in conversation.

Atterbury was the pulpit Cicero of his day, and, for the beauty, sweetness, and harmony of his style, has *still* an admirer in every person of elegance and taste. But to me, he has always appeared rather graceful than forcible, and more splendid, than impassioned. He is always dressed for court; and *studied* ornaments, however rich, cannot but have an uninteresting *uniformity*. He is invariably a fine, flowing, pellucid stream, never that impetuous torrent, which overflows its banks, carries all before it, and gives us the idea

of sublimity and grandeur. Nature would have tired, if she had presented us with nothing but fine, level extended *lawns*. She has wisely intermixed wild heaths, barren rocks, and craggy precipices in her infinitely beautiful and variegated landskips.

## LETTER XV.

**T**HE late, unfortunate Dr. Dodd owed, I should conceive, his great popularity to the advantage of his voice, person, manner, gesture and address. For indeed his compositions have not intrinsic merit enough to have challenged any extraordinary applause.

Weak, flimsy, superficial in his arguments, and rather plausible, than energetic in his language, it must have been  
only

only the *popularity* of his subjects, the new vein of *pathetick*, which he attempted, and his fortunate, congenial situation at the Magdalen, and in a metropolis, which, under the management of such advantages, procured him his extensive, *temporary* reputation.

But, alas! his popularity was very dearly purchased! It was built on the ruins of his innocence and virtue. Happy, if he had lived and died in obscurity, or been an humble curate in some sequestered village, where jasmines had clasped round his unenvied mansions, with unenlightened rusticks only for his associates! Admiration would not then have dazzled his eyes. His vanity could not have sought those *unequal* connexions, which he afterwards found himself unable to support, nor expensive pleasures led him to an action, which wounded religion in its very vitals, and brought so much disgrace on his sacred profession.

He

He might, then, like many other excellent men, have "fallen asleep," amidst the tender offices of bewailing friends, and grateful villagers, would have wetted his monument with tears of heart-felt gratitude and esteem. He is now a beacon, rising high in the bosom of the ocean, which says to the wary mariner, "beware of rocks and quicksands." It has been said, that Dodd, in the beginning of his sacred office, was remarkably pious. What is the conclusion? Hear it from compassion. Bathed in tears, she lifts up her voice, and cries aloud, "Let him, who "thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he "fall."

Faringdon's Sermons have very singular merit. It is but seldom that so much vivacity finds its way into this species of writing. They will improve your heart; they will please your taste, and inchant your imagination. It is many years since I read them; but the impression they



they made upon my mind, will never be erased.

If I durst invidiously, amidst their many excellencies, mention a defect, it is, that they are not sufficiently full of *scriptural* allusions. It is amazing, what force and energy the *judicious* introduction of scriptural passages, authorities and images, gives to discourses of this nature. The rest may be the ingenious conjectures of the author. *These* strike the reader with all the certainty and irresistible evidence of mathematical demonstration.

Though genius and taste may be permitted to *embellish*, the sacred writings should be the *ground-work* of all pulpit productions. They should check our flights into the regions of fancy, and they should guide us through the bewildering mazes of metaphysics.

Faringdon is long since dead, but the *real*\* author of these Discourses is yet

\* Rev. Mr. O——n, Rector of W——n.

alive.

alive. I have long had the honour of knowing him, and as long have admired his talents. And of his virtues and great benevolence, he exhibited, I think, no ordinary proof, when, to serve the family of a deceased brother clergyman, he gave his time, his labour, his abilities, and (what is more,) denied himself the dazzling prospect of *reputation*.

#### LETTER XVI.

**Y**OUNG people are in raptures with (what they *chuse* to call) Sterne's Sermons. But true criticism will not give them so dignified a name. They are the sacred stories of scripture, embellished with his *original* talent at the descriptive and pathetick. They are his *sentimental* journey to Zion; but have little more

of true *divinity* in them, than they might have had, if such an heavenly personage, as Jesus Christ, had never lived in the world, nor published his gospel.

Sermons, that aim only to *amuse* or *entertain*, are beneath the pulpit. They are the moral *beauism* of divines; an attempt to mix all the colours of the rainbow, with the dark solemnity of a most serious garb. They are musick, playing in the ears of a man, whose house is on fire, and can only *beguile* the moment, which should be spent in saving all the valuables of his furniture, and escaping for his life. Discourses of this nature should alarm the conscience; should display at once our misery and the mode of cure; should probe all the rankling sores of the heart, and pour in the precious oil of divine consolation.

Sterne was a very great, eccentric, original genius, but he was never formed for a clergyman. He had a levity of mind, that ill befitted so serious a character.

acter. What painter, in fancying an altar-piece, would have grouped a *beau d'esprit*, or a facetious, *bon vivant*, with our Saviour, and his apostles, at the last supper?

#### LETTER XVII.

**T**HE Christian Pattern will abundantly recommend itself by the name. The translation of it by Stanhope, is too diffuse. Wesley has, more faithfully, preserved the spirit and concise energy of the excellent original.

The singular merit of this little book is obvious from its translation into almost all languages. Ganganelli ascribes it, with pride, to an *Italian* author. But, whatever country gave it birth, it is filled with a sacred unction, and "the wisdom which cometh from above." Read a chap-



ter of it every day, and you will never want a fund of christian meditations.

There is more true piety and information, couched in reflexions on the seven Days of the Week, by Mrs. Talbot, than you will sometimes meet with in large, and splendid volumes. You cannot have a better train of reflexions for the beginning of your every day. This good lady lived in the family of Archbishop Secker, and seems to have imbibed that spirit of piety, which so eminently distinguished this illustrious prelate. She is long since dead; but her little book will live in the hearts of the pious, when time has tarnished all the lustre of more sounding names.

I have always thought, that little, short treatises of this kind have done the most extensive good. We can carry them about us, and the size does not deter us from looking *within*. People will not read *large* treatises of religion, and writers,  
in

in this respect, should accommodate themselves to the weakness of mankind. Tender stomachs cannot digest rich, substantial food, nor much, at a time.

Addison's Saturday's papers are all of them inimitable. They contain a rich fund of knowledge and entertainment, raise the imagination, and improve the heart. The good man very judiciously appointed them for Saturdays. They are the best preparatives for being "truly in the spirit, on the Lord's day."

Scott is not, perhaps, a lively or entertaining writer; but his Christian Life is a most excellent and *rational* system of divinity. Indeed subjects of this nature do not admit of so much *colouring*, as some others. Imagination may better lend its charms to painters, poets, orators, than to systematick divines. I think, however, that, even on sacred topicks, genius might, more frequently, embellish, than it *does*. Young people will have language,

guage, pathos, and picturesque images, or they will not read. Some little condescension is due to their weakness. Children must be cheated into the taking of useful medicines. The pill should be gilded, and the bitter mixed with a sweet.

## LETTER XVIII.

**T**HE immortal Locke analyzed the powers of the human understanding. Mason on Self-knowledge is the anatomist of the *heart*. If you would see yourself in your true colours, you must be *daily* conversant with this book. You should take it to your pillow, when you go to sleep. You should read it, when you rise. It has, however, in my idea, one capital defect. It is too much rami-

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fied into heads, divisions and subdivisions. The size of the house is too small for the numerous apartments.

Though I am, by no means, partial to the later, *fanciful* writings of Mr. Law, I will venture to recommend the two first books he ever produced, his *Serious Call*, and *Christian Perfection*. They are very awakening, animated treatises, written with great simplicity of style, strength of argument, and originality of manner. His *Miranda* is a very amiable character; and, though her piety has something of the *monastick*, in its air, there are traits in the portrait, that deserve your emulation.

One cannot recollect the *beginning* of this good man's life, when his conceptions were so clear, and his manner so impassioned, without shuddering at the danger of giving way to *fanciful theories*, or *visionary writers*. It is wonderful that so very discriminating a genius should



should have been, afterwards, shackled with the spiritual chymistry, and the unintelligible rhapsodies of Behmen. But even the great and amiable Fenelon was the disciple of a visionary. He, who wrote *Telemachus*, fell into reveries. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, and it *will* be tinged with our particular complexions."

## LETTER XIX.

YOUNG's Night-Thoughts have considerable merit, and may *occasionally* be read with advantage. But they are much discoloured with melancholy, and give christianity, which is *naturally* cheerful, too dark a complexion.

Born with no slender share of ambition, Young had anxiously and *unsuccessfully* courted promotion. The bubble always

always burst, as he attempted to grasp it; the *ignis fatuus* deluded him, as it has done thousands besides. Disappointment is generally followed with disgust, and disgust will always dictate to the pen.

With all that sensibility, which is the inseparable concomitant of genius, the author of the Night Thoughts had likewise the misfortune to be deprived, by an early death, of several of those relatives, from whose tender offices and soothing attentions, he might naturally have expected, in the evening of a gloomy life, to have received *some* consolation. His poems, therefore, have much the strain of elegy, and his piety is breathed in sighs. But his Night-Thoughts have awakened many into seriousness, and you must take them, as you do all *other* human things, with their good and their bad. The brightest pearl is surrounded with a mud. It is the business of taste and judgment to make the separation.

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The works of Wilson (the once bishop of Sodor and Man,) are a treasure of plain, *practical* devotion. His "Indian instructed," his "*Parochialia*," his "*Sacra Privata*," and his "Treatise on the Sacrament," are all serious and interesting.

This good prelate has not displayed much genius or learning. But his writings are useful, in proportion to their plainness, and will edify thousands, who could never have comprehended the depths of learning, or the subtilties of metaphysics.

Thrown into an ignorant and *superstitious* diocese, he stooped to the level of the meanest understanding. He considered himself as the father of his people, and they paid him a filial duty and respect. The islander *still* visits his grave, and weeps at the recollection of his deceased virtues. Such bishops will live in the memory of the faithful, when splendour is forgotten. His labours were unremitting, his zeal, primitive; and, if

he gave no *brilliance* to the mitre, he added to its *solid* weight.

## LETTER XX.

THE meditations of St. Austin are admirable, but have suffered not a little from the translation. It is, I still repeat it, in these *old* books, that we chiefly find the true spirit of piety. Has it evaporated, like some *mineral* waters, by a long preservation? Or is it that we would be men of philosophy and criticism, rather than divines? A *modern* theologian plays about the *head*, but scarcely warms the *heart*; an *ancient* writer carries us, by an irresistible impulse, into heaven, and fills us with all the raptures of devotion.

The difference will be very forcibly illustrated by the different construction  
of



of ancient and modern churches. The wide magnificence, the luminous darkness, the mouldering walls and long drawn aile of gothick structures inspire us with a pleasing melancholy, thoughtfulness and devotion; whilst the glaring light, artificial ornaments, primness and convenience of our *modern* synagogues fill us only with little, *worldly* ideas of elegance and taste.

Beveridge's private thoughts and resolutions richly deserve a place in your collection. They are not animated or elegant, but they are pious and useful. He is one of those hospitable friends, that gives us a very comfortable and rich repast without ceremony or ostentation.

Taylor is the Shakespeare of divinity. The fertility of his invention, the force of his arguments, the richness of his images and the copiousness of his style are not often to be paralleled in the works of ancient or modern writers. His "Holy Living and Dying" is a *chef d'œuvre*.

I do not remember to have received more pleasure and improvement from any book, that I have read for some time past, than from the two first volumes of Ganganelli's Letters. Besides being surprized to see such a generous mode of thinking in the sovereign pontiff, so much vivacity in a *monk*, tempered with so great a share of unaffected piety, I was quite charmed with the simplicity of his style, the beauty of his metaphors, and that spirit of philanthropy, which pervades the whole, and does, all along, more honour to his heart, than his easy periods, to his understanding.

There is something in the climate of Italy, which wonderfully heats and sublimates the imagination. It is the garden of Europe, and its writers breathe that agreeable perfume with which it is scented. Ganganelli's description of this country is particularly splendid. His statues breathe. His torrents absolutely murmur on the ear. His cliffs have an impending

impending horror on the fancy, and his gardens waft upon us aromatick smells. I would still gladly hope, notwithstanding all that has been advanced to the contrary, that these letters really came from this distinguished person. I am not willing to give up the idea, that liberality of sentiment has extended itself even to the papal throne.

## LETTER XXI.

MY DEAR LUCY,

YOU would observe from the complexion of my last letter, that I have recommended writers of very different sects, and from various denominations of christians. The truth is, I have considered their *spirit* and *tendency*, and not their name or party. I do not want to make you a

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methodist,

methodist, a dissenter, a mystick, a papist, a fanatick, an enthusiast, or any thing but a real christian. I should wish to divest your mind of every species of bigotry, and convince you, that real piety *has* existed under *every* communion.

When your judgment is more matured, you should examine authors of all different persuasions, as the Grecian artist did women, when he wished to paint his Venus of Medici. He selected from every one he saw, that *particular* limb or feature, in which they, *separately*, excelled. From one, he borrowed the most beautiful eye; from another, an hand; from a third, a bosom, &c. These, by a wonderful effort of genius, he combined into a perfect whole.

All systems, like all human figures, have their defects; but they have, likewise, their excellencies. Collect these distinct charms, and work them up in the crucible of your heart, till they produce  
“ the



“the very beauty of holiness” in your life and conversation.

Above all, look through all books and forms and ordinances, up to your God. Cherish, by every method, a spirit of devotion. Set the Lord always before you. Consider him, as the *soul* of the world, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Think, act, live, as in his presence, and do every thing to his glory. Begin, continue and end every day, as in his sight, and every action, as under his direction. Remember that all things on earth are but a shadow; that time is tumbling down the system of the universe; and that *religion only* can rise upon the ruins, by the labours it has inscribed to Eternity and God.

## LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR GIRL,

**T**HOUGH it may appear to be dealing with you in dry abstracted subjects above your age, yet I do think it necessary, that you should understand the grounds, on which your faith is built, or the testimony, which confirms the truth of christianity, and of the scriptures. You will thus be preserved from an uncomfortable fluctuation of opinions, and guarded from the false insinuations of those, that lie in wait to deceive.

I believe, indeed, we very falsely estimate the period, at which the talents of women begin to open, as well as the degree of their extent and comprehension, and superciliously withhold from you, that  
solid

solid information which alone, in *either* sex, can be the true foundation of a rational, a steady and consistent conduct.

This testimony in favour of revelation, is divided, for the sake of order, into two kinds, *internal* and *external*. The internal is that, which arises from the nature and excellency of the precepts *themselves*, and from the writers having had no *private* or sinister views to answer, but consulting only the *general* good and edification of mankind.

This *first* mark of authenticity is fixed on every page of the scriptures. The laws of Christ are of such a nature, as no man would have framed, who wished to avail himself of the passions, prejudices and interests of mankind; for they prescribe, on the other hand, an universal humility, mortification and self-denial; exhibit, in the strongest colours, the emptiness of riches, and the vanity of ambition, and have no other view, but to elevate the affections, regenerate the heart,

and put all men on looking beyond the transient concerns of this life, to the happiness of another. What else could happen to the original promulgers of these laws, but that, which *actually* did, violence and persecution?

Our blessed Lord positively declared, that his kingdom was not of this world. He sought none of its distinctions, and he received none, unless, by a strange perversion of ideas, we place them in the poverty of a manger, or the tortures of his cross. His *apostles* were inflamed with the very same *disinterested* zeal. They willingly resigned lucrative employments at the call of their Master; they cheerfully abandoned weeping friends; undertook the most hazardous voyages and travels; had no rest day or night; were carried before kings and governors of the earth, “and even hated by all men “for his name’s sake.”

Read the account of their labours, persecution, banishment, death; peruse the



the history of all the martyrs, written with their blood; and tell me, whether their zeal must not have come from *heaven*, or what could ever have inspired it, but a sincere conviction of duty, “a faith, which looked to a city with foundations, whose builder and maker was God?”

## • L E T T E R XXIII.

**T**HINK, my dear Girl, for yourself.

Are there any marks of secular wisdom or policy or imposture, in the conduct of the primitive apostles and christians? Examine the history of the whole world, as it relates to religion, and where *else* will you discover any portion of the same disinterested spirit, which actuated these original publishers of the gospel?

The Roman emperor instituted a sacred code to work upon the consciences, and to keep the minds of a savage and a barbarous people in subjection to government. Zoroaster, Lycurgus, Solon, all celebrated in their day, and certainly men of extraordinary talents, had more a view to *policy*, than any *moral* interests, in their respective systems of legislation. Mahomet availed himself of the narrow, *sensual* views, and passions of his followers, and of the particular complexion and dissensions of his times, merely to be the sole, exclusive monarch of an extensive empire, and procure a little, fading honour and distinction.

“The kingdom of all *these* men was “certainly of *this* world,” and their laws, in many instances, were repugnant to right reason, and the best and dearest interests of their fellow creatures. Of Christ, his very *enemies* said, “never man “spake like this man;” his injunctions had

had but *one* aspect—to *universal* happiness, and one, simple method to it—*universal reformation*. The angels that announced him, at his first appearance, proclaimed “peace on earth, and good-will towards men.”

Nor is the wonderful *progress* of this religion, in so *short* a space of time, over all Asia, and a great part of Europe, indeed over almost the *whole* of the, *then*, known world, the least convincing proof of its divine original. Consider the *missionaries*—illiterate fishermen and mechanics, and you must conclude, either that they were endowed with *supernatural* gifts and assistance, or that their wonderful *success* was even a greater *miracle*, than the endowment, you dispute.

On this subject, permit me to recommend to your serious perusal, Soame Jenyns’s “Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion.” He is, on the whole, a fanciful writer; but this is an excellent,  
little

little book, that has done much good, and comes with greater force, to every bosom, as he was once, according to his own candid confession, in the number of those, who disputed the sacred truths of revelation. You will receive great pleasure and improvement, likewise, from Addison's "Evidences of Christianity," arranged and collected into one volume; and from a late, similar production of the celebrated Dr. Beattie.

Every *word* of the scriptures, indeed, must convince any candid or thoughtful person, that they come from God. The passions, pride, vices and interests of mankind have induced not a few to set up for scepticks. "Much learning has made them mad," or a little has rendered them *frivolous* and conceited. They have sought only to distinguish themselves by uncommon opinions; they have been *dupes* to their own *fancied* penetration; they have attempted



tempted to grasp the immensity of the Deity, in arms of *flesh*, or have shrunk into scepticism, as a refuge from their vices.

Hear what the scripture saith, "Every  
"one, that doeth evil, hateth the light,  
"neither cometh to the light, lest his  
"deeds should be reprov'd. Except  
"ye become as little children, hum-  
"ble, docile, tractable, ye cannot enter  
"into the kingdom of heaven. How  
"can ye believe, which receive ho-  
"nour one of another, and seek not  
"the honour, which cometh of God  
"only?"

LETTER

## LETTER XXIV.

**T**HE *external* testimony, in favour of the christian religion, arises from prophecy, miracles, and the corresponding evidence of history. And these seem to include all the *probable* methods, which heaven could employ for the conversion of mankind.

The whole sacred book of the Old Testament is, from beginning to end, a clear prediction of the Messiah. One of the prophets has foretold the precise year, in which this "righteous branch" should make his appearance. And this event, you know, *has* taken place to the comfort of the christian world.

Others have predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, Babylon, Tyre, the dispersion

# YOUNG LADY.

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sion and calamities of the Jews, &c. long before they happened; and all profane history, which has been written since their time, will inform you, that these awful judgments were wonderfully accomplished, in their proper season.

The Revelation contains *darker* hints of some events, that are visibly, though *gradually*, fulfilling, at this moment. But as I can only *glance* at the subject, you will see it treated in such a manner, as to confirm your faith and exalt your devotion, in the late Bishop of Bristol (Dr. Newton's) "Discourses on the Prophecies."

The miracles of our Saviour and of his immediate apostles meet you in every page of the inspired book; and in *profane* history, you will learn from those, who were avowed *enemies* to the cause, that, at a particular period of time, there *did* exist such a sacred personage, as Jesus Christ, who wrought miracles, healed the sick and raised the dead; such a sect,

as

as that of Christians, who met to receive the sacrament, who bound themselves by *this* oath, to commit no iniquity, practised a wonderful innocence and austerity of manners, and, beyond all example, loved one another. You will see likewise, in the same pages, a full description of their manners, morals, ceremonies and religious institutions.

The lapse of time, moreover, to us, who live in these *later* times, has given an *additional* force to the evidences, in favour of revelation. The ingenious author of the Spectator, in his day, considered the particular case of the Jews, their calamities, dispersion, vagabond, unsettled state, &c. as a standing and incontestible *miracle*, in support of the sacred writings. They *still* continue (what is there so circumstantially foretold,) unable to incorporate with any people, and loaded with the hatred and abhorrence of all. The testimony, therefore, from  
*their*



*their* history is proportionably more illustrated and confirmed.

The destruction of the Romish church, likewise, is palpably predicted in the scriptures. And, if we may judge from strong appearances, is daily approaching. The great and general diffusion of knowledge; the consequent progress of religious toleration, and that dispersion of the mists of prejudice from all eyes, produced by the genial rays of a meridian sun, must, in time, effect the downfall of all tyranny and superstition; whilst the emperor, employed in destroying monasteries, and encouraging population, appears an instrument, in the hand of Providence, for accelerating the approach of this auspicious moment. The late dismemberment, moreover, of territory from the Holy See; the contentions, in which the sovereign pontiff has been involved by those monarchs, who *once* trembled at his frown; and the mere, *external* deference only,

only, which is paid to his authority, prove that his throne is tottering from its base, and, like all other human things, approaching to its dissolution. Thus is our holy religion founded on a rock, against which the winds and waves of infidelity beat in vain. Proud men may reason, and wicked men pretend to doubt, but "the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

## LETTER XXV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

WONDER not at the diversity of opinions in religion. It has been from the *beginning*, and will continue to be the case, to the *end*, of the world. Men will never have the same religious sentiments,

sentiments, till you can give them the very same *natural* dispositions of humility, candour, teachableness; the same capacity, education, acquaintance, or even the same set of features or the same complexion.

The history of the church, from the first moment to the present, is an history of these dissensions. So soon as Christ and his apostles disappeared, men mixed "tares of human opinion with this good seed of the word." Even two of these apostles had a sharp contention, and the spirit has never vanished from their successors.

There has been the same fashion in religious opinions, as in common things. Particular notions have been abetted, laid aside, resumed and dismissed again, under different names and leaders, exactly like the varying modes of dress, furniture or entertainments.

Nor is this the least impeachment of our holy religion. The truth of that, like

like the God, whence it comes, is the  
 “same yesterday, to-day and for ever.”  
 It is reserved, as the privilege of a more  
 glorious era, that all men shall be of one  
 “heart and of one soul, and keep the  
 “unity of the spirit in the bond of  
 “peace.”

In all *human* systems of faith, there  
 must be error. Where error is *involun-*  
*tary*, and springs from no *criminal* pas-  
 sions, but only from a weakness or *misdi-*  
*rection* of judgment, the Almighty, who  
 looketh chiefly at the heart, doubtless,  
 will forgive. Charity, in the mean time,  
 is the great bond of union, amongst all  
 parties. “They shall come from the  
 “east, and from the west, and sit down in  
 “the kingdom of God.” If we hope to  
 be companions in glory, we “should not  
 “surely fall out by the way.”

The christian blood, which has stained  
 so many ages of the church, has flowed  
 from the most *malignant* and selfish pas-  
 sions. The gospel breathes nothing but

universal



universal love, and candour and forbearance. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," is the mild rebuke to every persecutor, that would slay with the sword.

## LETTER XXVI.

THOUGH it is really *invidious*, yet for the sake of directing your judgment, and gratifying a very natural and laudable curiosity, I will give you a brief, comprehensive sketch of the opinions of the most celebrated religious sects, that have prevailed in this kingdom. You will thus be able to form some comparative idea of their merits or defects; you will not be so likely to be "tossed about with every blast of vain doctrine;" and you will never feel yourself

yourself at a loss, in company, when they become the subject of conversation.

*Pagans* are those who are wholly unenlightened with revelation, and worship *idols*, instead of the true God. These idols have been various, as the caprices or imaginations of the people, amongst whom they are found; sometimes fictitious beings, such as Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, Mars, Juno, Venus, Minerva, &c. sometimes good qualities personified, Faith, Hope, Victory, Concord; sometimes animals, as Serpents, Crocodiles, &c. or even vegetables, as Leek, Onion, Garlick. These last were objects of adoration amongst the Egyptians.

Before the appearance of Christ, almost the whole world was covered with paganism. All the learning and politeness of Athens and of Rome could not dispel this ignorance. It has only vanished, "where the sun of righteousness has appeared with healing in his wings."

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An ingenious writer has said, that, if we divide the known countries of the globe into thirty equal parts, five will be Christians; six, Mahometans, and *nineteen*, Pagans. How dreadful the reflexion, that the greatest of all possible blessings should have penetrated but so small a way! When we consider the privileges of the gospel, how gladly would one carry it, if it were possible, into every country of the known world! How ardently should we pray to our Father in heaven, that his kingdom of grace may daily come on earth, and how thankful should we be to that gracious Providence, that has fixed *our* lot in a christian land, and under the enlivening beams of revelation!

## LETTER XXVII.

MY DEAR GIRL,

**M**AHOMETANS are so called from being followers of the great impostor, Mahomet. This extraordinary man was born at Mecca, in Arabia, about the middle of the sixth century; and, in his fortieth year, after some time previously spent in the silence, retirement and austerity of a cave, presumed to stile himself, *the Apostle of God*; pretended to have received, from *heaven*, a new and a *last* revelation, which was to illustrate and inforce, what had been mistaken or perverted, in the *christian*, by the lapse of time or the sophistry of men. He affected, likewise, a commission from above, if *gentler* methods should prove *ineffectual*,



to propagate his particular religion by the sword.

His tenets are contained in the Koran, which, for its singularity, is worth your reading. To give them *plausibility*, they are interspersed with some christian doctrines; but, at the same time, carry a most artful *address* to the passions; allowing polygamy, and describing the future paradise, as consisting, *principally*, of *sensual* pleasures; splendid, silken garments; rivers of water, wine, milk, honey; musick, feasting, and most beautiful women.

Mahomet was a man of great talents and ambition. He had no view, but to render himself the sole and formidable monarch of an extensive empire. *Religion* was made the *instrument* for executing his wicked and tyrannical designs. Hence all his austerities, disguises, deceptions. Hence he pretended such a familiar intercourse with heaven, and, by his singular address, founded a religion, which has continued, since his time, with *little*

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*variation,*

*variation*, to overspread a considerable part of the world. It is professed by the Turks and Persians, by several nations amongst the Africans, and by many amongst the East Indians.

The *outline* of it was sketched by the hands of a great master. It was suited to the climate; it took advantage of the disorders and dissensions, *then* prevailing amongst Christians, and it promised a species of gratifications, to which our nature will *always* feel the strongest propensity.

The *bulk* of people, in any country, do not, indeed *cannot*, think or judge for themselves; it will therefore, always be in the power of those, who have any *popular* talents, to make the multitude their proselytes and *slaves*; and thus, if we turn over the history of the world, shall we find the ambition, lust, and avarice of a *few*, trampling on the dearest interests of the *many*.

## LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

UNDER the name of Christians, however differing from each other in *private* opinions, or divided and subdivided amongst themselves, are included all those, who embrace the sacred revelation and doctrines of *Jesus Christ*. Amongst these, the Roman Catholicks, both in point of numbers, and the figure they have made in the history of Europe, may seem to claim some degree of precedence.

This religion, which has subsisted for such a length of time, and covered so considerable a part of the world, is little else but a system of *political tyranny*, established by the clergy, over the *consciences*

and *fortunes* of men, merely to enrich and aggrandize *themselves*. They, who should have aspired to no other greatness, but to become the servants of all, for their eternal good, have undertaken "to lord it over God's heritage, and rule it with a rod of iron."

Can any thing in the world be more inconsistent? The Pope, in all the plenitude of *temporal* power, presumptuously styles himself the *vicar general* of Jesus Christ! that Jesus, who appeared in a *manger*, emptied himself of all his glory, and disclaimed all *temporal* greatness and distinction!

The publick worship of the papists is overladen with *ceremony*. It is performed in a *learned* language, unknown to the vulgar, and intermixed with such a continual change of dress, attitude and ceremonies, as are only calculated to excite the *ridicule* of a rational and enlightened mind. The great, Supreme, incomprehensible Spirit, is only to be served



served with the *heart* and affections; and the most unlearned person in a congregation, should surely understand every prayer that is uttered.

The Roman Catholicks acknowledge the Pope for their head. They think the church infallible in its councils and decisions, and brand all, who differ from them, with the odious name of *hereticks*, as people, who are not within the pale of salvation. They keep the minds of poor people in *ignorance*; they do not permit them to read the scriptures, but refer them for instruction solely to their *priests*; they maintain the necessity of confessing their sins and frailties to their pastor, and the validity of *human* absolution; they believe the absurd and incomprehensible doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or that the elements of bread and wine, in the sacrament, are changed into the *real* body and blood of Christ; they have been accused of worshipping images; saints, they certainly invoke, to be medi-

ators for them; they have swelled the number of sacraments to *seven*; these are baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and marriage; they admit the doctrine of a purgatory after death, in which souls are refined from their former pollutions; they forbid their priests to *marry*, preach up the necessity, or *superior sanctity* of a single life, and induce as many people of fortune, as possible, to bury themselves in convents and monasteries, and pour their fortunes into the bosom of the church; in some of the more *corrupt* ages, indulgences for the *greatest* crimes might be purchased with *money*, and every degree of guilt has had its stated sum of acquittance; persecution for conscience sake, has been deemed meritorious, and their annals are stained with the *blood* of thousands.

There are, doubtless, multitudes of papists, who, in an enlightened age, *shudder* at many of these dreadful opinions, and  
*laugh*

laugh at others; the gay and volatile people of France, *in general* ridicule them all; and make a *natural* transition from the extreme of superstition to that of unbelief. Whether these be, or be not, the principles of the *present members*, they are, indisputably, the established doctrines of the church, however varnished over by art, or evaded by affectation; and though this people, at present, are loyal, inoffensive subjects, and seemingly attached to the sovereign on the throne, yet there is reason to fear, that a renewal of their power would be attended with a repetition of their violence, and blow up the seemingly extinguished embers of hatred and persecution. Such a many-headed monster should be carefully guarded. Deluges of *human* blood are not to be forgotten.

For *their* sake, and for the honour of christianity, I do most ardently wish their conversion. I long to embrace, as brethren, a thousand excellent men, who

now live, as I cherish the memories of many, who have *died*, within their communion. Nor do I think the period is very *distant*. Bigotry cannot much longer be a weed in the present highly cultivated state of Great Britain. I have before mentioned the emperor, as a *probable* instrument of this good work. His ambition, I trust, will thus be consecrated to the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind. The happiest events we celebrate, have, sometimes, sprung from the impurest passions. Our own reformation from this church was *singularly* effected. The Almighty can bend the counsels of men, in such a manner, as to answer his sovereign designs. "He doeth what he will, in the armies of heaven, and amongst all the inhabitants of the earth."



## LETTER XXIX.

THE *Greek* church is much less known amongst us, as to its doctrine or discipline, than the Roman. Indeed there are, comparatively, but few members of it in England. It was first established in Greece, from whence it derived its name, and extends to some other parts of Turkey. It is often called the *eastern*, in contradistinction to the Romish, which is the *western*, church.

Though the professors of this religion disavow the supremacy of the Pope, and many other opinions of the Holy See, yet they are considerably tinged with superstition. Their worship is overladen with ceremony, shew, splendid dresses, fastings, austerities, &c. as well as the former. They are governed by bishops and patriarchs. Their head is the patriarch of Constantinople.

## LETTER XXX.

MY DEAR LUCY,

**D**ISSENTER is a *vague* word, which, in its full latitude, may be applied to *all* who differ from the established religion. *Originally*, however, it meant only one kind of people, *then* distinguished by the name of presbyterians, who rather dissented from the *discipline* and *polity*, than the *opinions*, of the church. These, in general, embraced the *sentiments* of Calvin, relating to foreknowledge, divine decrees, irresistible grace, predestination, reprobation, &c. They disclaimed episcopacy, and their government was vested in presbyters and synods. The word, *presbyter*, means an elder, and *synod*, an ecclesiastical council or assembly.

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The *present* race of dissenters may be strictly subdivided into two classes; those, who still retain the doctrines of Calvin, and his mode of discipline, and call themselves, from their form of government, *Independents*; and such, as assume the more specious title of protestant dissenters. The first are extremely rigid and puritanical in their outward deportment; but they do not breathe all the *sweetness* of piety, nor are their annals unstained with instances of intolerance and persecution. Their *leader* was a furious and unrelenting bigot. His murder of the poor, honest Servetus, will be an eternal stigma on his memory, and throw a dark shade over his pretended virtues.

Indeed how can people, with *such* sentiments, act otherwise? If *their* God be only merciful to a *few*, elect, how should *they* think of a *general* benevolence? If *he* can be cruel to so many *millions* of creatures, where is the harm of imitating *his* example, or *exterminating thousands*?

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I do not know that the latter kind of dissenters have any *settled* code of faith. "Every minister has a psalm of his own, has a doctrine, has an interpretation," so that very *opposite* sentiments, may be consistently delivered by different persons, in the same pulpit. They value themselves highly, with whatever justice, on their learning, candour and liberality. Far from being actuated with any blind or *enthusiastick* zeal, they seem to *worship* reason, as their guide, and sacrilegiously exalt it, almost on the *ruins* of revelation. Their danger is of falling into scepticism, the most alarming and *incurable* of all spiritual disorders. They are said, in general, to disbelieve the doctrine of the Trinity, of the atonement, and divinity of Christ, and unite with the Calvinists, in *one* sentiment, at least—that of abhorring episcopacy, and of considering the established church, as a system, raised by *priestcraft*, and supported by *superstition*.

LETTER



## LETTER XXXI.

THE methodists are *comparatively* a new sect, and sprung up, about sixty years ago, under the auspices of John Wesley, and George Whitfield, then students at Oxford. They received their name, from affecting to live by a stricter regimen and *method*, than other people.

They have been long divided into two classes, according to the different principles, espoused by their leaders. The first follow the opinions of Arminius, under the guidance of Wesley, who is *still* a very venerable looking patriarch, at their head; and the other, believing divine decrees, foreknowledge, reprobation and election, are more strictly members of the kirk, (only that they do not admit  
its.

its discipline) having long since lost their *original* director.

I do not know that the methodists, (particularly they who follow Wesley,) are dissenters from the establishment, further than in having separate meetings to inkindle and inspirit the zeal of their followers; a circumstance, which they conceive to be much neglected by the *regular* clergy. They are baptized with *us*; attend our services and sacrament; admire our liturgy; and only blame us for our lukewarmness and want of energy and animation. This censure, it is true, comes but with a very ill grace from such a people; but, I fear, we cannot easily refute it.

They had *originally* a great share of *enthusiasm*. But it is greatly softened by the indulgence they have received, and mellowed down by time. They are no longer, a new; they are no longer, a *persecuted* sect,

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The journals of Wesley, written in the infancy of his career, are a strange medley of goodness and enthusiasm. The old man has lived long enough to have seen his error. That glow of imagination is considerably abated, which mistook shadows for substance, and made fiction pass for truth.

The great error amongst this people, is their employing such low, illiterate men, as their instructors, and fancying them under the *immediate* guidance of divine inspiration—preaching up the necessity of *instantaneous* conversion and justification by a sort of *miracle*—making faith to consist in a *full assurance* of salvation, and denouncing damnation against those, who have it not in this supereminent degree—and lastly, in supposing this assurance to depend on certain *inward, extraordinary* impulses, rather than the scriptures.

These sentiments lead many *artful* people into a wicked pretence of feelings  
and

and assurances, which they *have not*; others of *warm imaginations* to the belief of what is only chimerical, and plunge still more of honest, timid minds, or an hypochondriacal temperament, into melancholy and despair.

The Saviour, doubtless, can forgive sins to *whom*, and at *whatever moment*, he pleases. A thief, upon the cross, was a *miracle* of his mercy; but this is not the *ordinary* method of his providence; there are, undoubtedly, thousands of excellent people, who pass through the world without such a full *assurance* of faith; and the spiritual life, like that of animals or vegetables, is *generally* progressive. We grow imperceptibly "from strength to strength," and, though the peace of God may be diffused through our consciences, we *dare* not say, "that we have already attained."

The methodists were, *once*, extremely lavish in their censures of others; but justice obliges me to confess, that they  
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are now, in general, an harmless, inoffensive and pious people. If they be gloomy, it is their *own* misfortune; if they go mourning all their days, *theirs* is the sorrow; the world, in general, is too dissipated and unreflecting.

As to their leader, he is, doubtless, a prodigy. Whatever be the merit or demerit of his opinions, his indefatigable labours, activity, pilgrimages, zeal, and resolution challenge our amazement. An old man of nearly ninety rising constantly at four o'clock in the depth of winter, preaching *frequently*, on the same day, journeying from place to place, "and from one people to another kingdom;" himself the bishop, secretary, judge, governor of his people, the main spring of such a vast, and *complicated* machine, is a phenomenon, that will vanish from our earthly horizon, when he ceases to exist. His opinions, it is said, do not injure his *cheerfulness*. Time has planted few wrinkles

wrinkles on his forehead, though it has covered his head with snow.

Notwithstanding the religious zeal, which works wonders in his favour, and the deference, naturally paid to the *first* founder of a sect, particularly when possessed of any genius or learning, yet his *peaceful* government of so numerous a people, for such a length of time, is a proof of extraordinary talents and address. Whenever he dies, his disciples will dwindle. They will not easily agree about a successor. No successor can have so undisputed a sovereignty, or possess so unmolested a throne. They will separate from the church, and the separation will be fatal. It will be the loss of union, consequence and power. The *republick* will probably be divided in its councils, and have less dispatch and energy in the execution.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXII.

THE Baptists or Anabaptists are a species of the independent dissenters, who differ from their brethren chiefly in the *mode* of administering *baptism*, which, they conceive, should always be by *immersion*. There were many of this persuasion, amongst the reformed abroad. In Holland, Germany, and the north, they were called Anabaptists, or Mennonites; in Piedmont, and the south, they were found amongst the Albigenes. In England, they are few, and, at present, little mentioned.

The Quakers arose about the middle of the seventeenth century, and had their name affixed upon them in *derision*, from the violent *emotions*, with which they affected to be *agitated*, when they conceived themselves,

themselves under the more immediate impulse of the *spirit*. They explain the whole letter of scripture into a kind of *inward*, and spiritual *allusion*. They never speak, preach or exhort in publick, but when they fancy themselves to be moved by *the spirit*; they set aside the necessity of the *external* sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, and would certainly be right, if men had no *matter* in their composition, and if the imagination was not to be awakened through the medium of the *senses*.

They acknowledge no head, but Christ, no master but God; refuse to pay tithes, and think the common civilities of life *profane* and *unchristian*. They even appear covered in the presence of their sovereign, and address him with the familiar appellation of *thou*. They are a religious community within themselves, and their government is wholly *internal*. You may see their principles ably delineated by their ingenious apologist, Barclay.



There are, however, many excellent traits in the character of the quakers. They are, on the whole, a peaceable, inoffensive people; support their own poor; have manifested, for a long time, from a spirit of humanity, a strong and pointed opposition to the very infamous practice of the slave trade; they never disturb the peace of the church, or shackle the wheels of government, and are tolerated in all their *innocent* peculiarities by a liberal and an enlightened kingdom.

## LETTER XXXIII.

THE Moravians, or the *brethren*, are a species of protestants, who, in the fifteenth century, threw off the despotick yoke

yoke of Rome, animated by the zealous exhortations and heroick example of John Hufs. Count Zinzendorff was a very eminent leader of this sect, and, for his signal services amongst them, has been distinguished by the name of Papa or spiritual father; and a Monsieur la Trobe, who lived in the metropolis, and made continual circuits amongst them, has, more lately, acquired great celebrity in their annals.

They have more than once passed through the fire ordeal of persecution. Their religious principles, however, are sound and orthodox. At a period, when great clamours were raised against them, Potter, the then learned Archbishop of Canterbury, pronounced them a protestant, episcopal community, as they retained no doctrines that were repugnant to the articles of the church of England; and the pious bishop of Sodor and Man (Wilson) was created

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an honorary president of (what is called) the reformed *Tropus*, in the *Unitas fratrum*, (the unity of the brethren.)

Their discipline and mode of government are very singular. They form within themselves a religious community, independent of every other, and extending to all their brethren throughout the world. They are not suffered to intermarry with people of a different persuasion; they have groups of religious houses, scattered through the kingdom; they have choirs of single sisters and brethren; the first are occupied in every kind of ingenious needle-work, in which they have made an amazing proficiency, and the latter in all sorts of mechanical employments; and their earnings, after a maintenance for themselves, which they receive in the house, go into one common fund for the support of the general society, and particularly of the children, belonging to the married brethren and

sisters, which are fed, educated and clothed in these religious seminaries.

The morals and chastity of their *women* are guarded with a very peculiar vigilance; they are not permitted to step without the walls of their asylum, unaccompanied by a superintendent of their own sex; when any of them, or the brethren is married, it is transacted by the casting of lots, and supposed to be ordained by a *particular* providence, and the union is generally formed with some members of their society *abroad*. They much resemble the methodists in having private conferences, classes, leaders, and examinations concerning the state and progress of grace in the soul, and none are permitted to receive the sacrament, without having previously passed through a very severe process of religious examination.

Their worship consists principally in *singing*, and hence, perhaps, their societies are called choirs. Their residences have  
much



much the air of religious houses; and their single brethren and sisters are often in the mortified state of *involuntary* friars or nuns. Their devotions, like those of a convent, are almost perpetual; and they seem to have forgotten, that they were born for *society*, as well as for themselves.

Such restraints on nature are not tolerable, and nature will, sometimes, assert her rights, and stain their history with indiscretions. We were sent here to be *tried*. Innocence, that subsists only by the *absence* of temptation, scarcely deserves the name; *perpetual* devotion is an *impossibility*; it is as impracticable, as that the eye should be ever looking at the *same* object; and, if I do not much mistake, that piety is most ardent, which knows most of the world, from dear-bought experience, and finding it a scene of mortification and vanity, appeals to *heaven* for more substantial satisfaction.

There are many scattered societies of Moravians in England, but they appear to be a declining sect. It is *immured* ignorance or prejudice, which has led Christians to separate from each other for little, frivolous distinctions. The era, I hope, is coming which will bring us "more into one common fold, under one shepherd, CHRIST JESUS, the "Righteous."

There is certainly a great mixture of *good* in this people. What a pity, that they cannot join with us in offering a rational service, and lifting up one common hallelujah, to the great God and Father of all.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXIV.

I KNOW not why the Mysticks are so called, unless it be for discovering *mystical* passages in the scripture, or making religion at large wear the appearance of *mystery*. They are a very ancient sect, and sprung up so early, as about the close of the third century.

This people, by a very singular kind of ingenuity, discover a spiritual or hidden sense in the most *literal* passages of scripture, and indeed convert the whole, rather into an amusing allegory, than a plain and simple narrative of facts.

They hold all divine truth to come, by an *immediate* influx, from the *spiritual* world, and pretend to a knowledge of God, and heavenly things, that can only

be attained in this *extraordinary* manner. Sometimes they are called Quietists, because they maintain, that the soul should be in a still, *quiet*, passive state, undistracted with noise and cares, and almost superior to sense or matter, in order to receive this divine illumination. Their station, in the thermometer of different, religious orders, is that of lighter elements, carried by superior subtilty into the air, whilst others, composed of grosser matter, adhere, by an invincible necessity, to the earth, till death dissolves the union betwixt soul and body.

The mystick theology seems to be the philosophy of *Plato*, refined and grafted upon a Christian stock; the *quixotism* of religion, which affects to attain in *life*, what the scriptures have taught us to expect only after *death*; an intimate knowledge of the Almighty, visions, revelations, almost *intuition*!

If the mysticks would reason for a moment, (but people, under the guidance  
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of immediate illumination are far above the *vulgar* shackles of *reason*,) they would see that such a subtle, metaphysical system is poorly fitted for the reception of mankind at large, who can scarcely be brought to understand, relish, or practise the most obvious truths; they would acknowledge *that* divinity to be the best, which does not, with the lightness of some *matter*, ascend into the air, but contents itself on earth, with inculcating and enforcing the most obvious duties of common life; the reciprocal obligations of parents and children, masters and servants, kings and subjects; the subjection of the passions, the discipline of reason, and the duty of all to one *common* God. They would know, that their opinions must create an indifference, or a fancied *superiority* to those established ordinances, which are the very basis of all religion, and that if *all* men were governed by their passive *quietude*, there would be none to encounter with the vices and disorders

of a mixed, heterogeneous state. Christians would "cease to be the light of the world, or the salt of the earth;" there would be none to stem, by powerful, *turpid* eloquence, the ragings of iniquity, or let "the lustre of their example shine before men."

Our LORD's piety was not of this kind. It sought not the indulgence of recluse contemplation. It was not passive, but active; every where, with the sinner and the saint, to reprove the one, and encourage the other; in the wilderness to pray, and in the world, to reform; at a marriage, "to rejoice with them, that did rejoice," and, at the grave of Lazarus, to "weep" with his afflicted friends.

LETTER

## LETTER XXXV.

THE Mystick theology boasts some great names. Madame de Guion was a warm espouser of it in France; a woman of great fashion and consequence, remarkable for the goodness of her heart, and the regularity of her conduct, but of a capricious, unsettled temper, and liable to the seductions of a warm imagination.

The opinions of this lady made a great noise in that country, about the year 1687. They were confuted, some time afterwards, by the celebrated Bosfuet. The great and good Fenelon undertook her vindication; but his book was condemned by Pope Innocent the twelfth.

The Teutonick philosopher (Jacob Behmen,) was a kind of father to this sect, and published a book, which contains a system of the most absurd and incoherent reveries, that perhaps ever gained an admission into the world. It is a species of moral chymistry, an occult philosophy, a bewildering explanation, and a cloudy light, which I will venture to say, that neither Sir Isaac Newton, nor Mr. Locke, with all their clearness of conception, could have been able to understand.

Law, who wrote the "Serious Call" (a nonjuror of Northamptonshire,) was an abettor of these doctrines; a man of very exemplary life, and discriminating talents; but it was an honour, reserved for the late Baron Swedenborg to carry them to their very height of perfection. Compared with *his*, all other writings on the subject, are but the morning, contrasted with the perfect day. He tells us *confidently* of his unrestrained communications with



with the spiritual world, visions, revelations; he gives to every portion of scripture, a natural, a spiritual, and a cœlestial sense; he describes to us the very form, and furniture, and apparatus of heaven; he retails to the reader his conversations with *angels*; he describes the condition of Jews, Mahometans, Christians, of the English, French, Dutch, of clergymen of every denomination, laity, &c. in another world: he has a key to unlock all the hitherto impenetrable secrets of futurity, and already, whilst in the body, “knows even as he is known.”

What is the inference? When *imagination* is permitted to usurp the place of *reason*, fanaticism becomes a christian duty, and enthusiasm the more *credible*; in proportion as it exceeds all bounds of *credibility*.

What can induce men of *sense* to hearken to these dreams? Early prejudices, confined reading, singular acquaintance, a recluse life, a gloomy, speculative,

culative, abstracted turn of mind, and associating together, for a long time, particular, however *incongruous*, ideas.

This will account for *any* reveries. It accounts for *insanity*. And men, from this cause, may, in a *particular* instance (suppose religion,) be insane, though, in all *other* respects, their minds are ever so enlightened, or ever so expansive.

It must, however, be said in favour of the mysticks, that their principles inculcate in the strongest manner, the necessity of spiritual-holiness and regeneration; that their lives, in general, are unblemished and exemplary. They are a quiet, retired people, who let the world go as it *will*, as to riches or promotions; who enjoy indeed, in a passive *superiority*, those tumults of the crowd, as higher spirits may *condescend* to look down, with a pitying smile, on the toils of mortals; and who deny themselves all the gayer pleasures, in order to relish, in a sublimer degree, all the raptures of devotion.

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If the opinions of the Quietists spring from spiritual pride, it is more than they suspect; for they preach up the deepest self-abasement, annihilation, and poverty of spirit; they almost starve the *animal* part of their nature, to nurse the *angelick*, and half *live* on meditation.

If such people have errors, they should be touched with a gentle hand. If they are misled, it is in *amiable* company. There is not a much more lovely name than that of Fenelon. Few men have possessed such a sweetness of piety.

I have but one wish for them myself, or any other sect, and it is a wish of charity; that what is wrong in *any of us*, may be done away, because I long to meet them all in the kingdom of heaven.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXXVI.

**T**HEOLOGY, like arts and sciences, has its scholastick, *technical* terms, and I will endeavour to explain them.

The *Arians* are so called from Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, in the year 315. He believed Christ to be God, but conceived him inferior to the Father, as to his deity and essence. The term, at present, is indiscriminately applied to all, who, in any degree, embrace this opinion.

This heresy was first revived by Mr. Whiston, in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The works of Dr. Clarke afterwards entailed upon him the name of Semi-Arian. (Half-Arian.)

Socinians



Socinians derive their name from the illustrious family of Sozzini, which flourished, a long time, at Sienna in Tuscany, and produced several great, and eminent men. Faustus Socinus, the great author of this sect, was born at Sienna in 1539, denied the divinity of Christ, the *personality* of the Holy Ghost, and the *perpetuity* of baptism, as a divine ordinance.

The most distinguished men, who have favoured this opinion, are Le Clerc, Biddle, Lardner, Lowman, Fleming, Lindsey, &c.

## L E T T E R XXXVII.

**T**HE Deists are so called, perhaps, from the Latin word, *Deus*, a God; because they acknowledge only the existence of a God, profess no particular form

form or system of religion, and only follow the law and light of nature. Of these, however, there are many *degrees*, from the moderate ones, who believe revelation, in a certain, *qualified* sense, to those, who absolutely disavow it in *all*. The first, who figured or wrote in this country, was Baron Herbert of Cherbury.

Deism is *generally* embraced, either by men of a cold, phlegmatick, philosophical cast, who are indisposed to believe any thing, for which they have not absolute demonstration, or by those, who, having never thought or reasoned, consider it as a mark of wit and talents, to set up for unbelievers.

The first deserve an answer, and it is easy. All *nature* is full of mysteries, as well as revelation; the union of soul and body is a *miracle*; the infinite divisibility of matter, and the idea of an *eternal* duration, are absolutely incomprehensible; nothing can be more so, than the necessary

fary *self-existence* of God. The latter are better answered with irony. Their infidelity is a fashionable *livery*. When deism is not in vogue amongst the gay circles, they will soon put it off, and disavow their ever having worn so obsolete a garb.

A third class of Deists may be said to spring up from the superstitions of Rome. Great men, who live in catholick countries, are disgusted with their bigotry, and are apt to think religion in *general*, only an *imposition* on the credulity of mankind. Was not this the case with all that splendid group, Rousseau, Voltaire, the Abbé de Raynal, and Helvetius, who wrote a famous treatise *de l'Esprit*? Genius hates shackles, and shackles are the *peculiar* manufacture of Rome.

A fourth class of Deists are continually produced by the love of fame, venting itself in paradoxes, and singular opinions to make a noise; by an aversion to the  
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strictness of gospel morality, and by criminal passions, which endeavour to hide their guilt in the shades of unbelief. Some of these have commenced authors, and endeavoured to immortalize their errors by the press. But their books, on a *near* view, have been found only gilt and lettered with *vanity*, and have quickly been consigned to the oblivion they deserved. Whilst we are in *this* world, enemies will mix these *tares* with the good seed of the gospel. We must wait till *harvest*, to see the final separation.

The Deists are the greatest enemies, of all others, to true religion. Their pride and scepticism stop up every avenue, by which divine grace and conviction should be conveyed to the soul. Nature, with *them*, is only a *necessary* system of causes and effects. Creation rose into its present splendour, by a kind of *fatality*. Thunders roar, lightnings flash, volcanos vomit, tempests rage, seas overflow, millions perish, and kingdoms are desolated, only  
by



by a train of *stated*, inevitable causes. They exclude a *first* efficient mover, and think not of the providence, which, at a certain moment, and for the wisest, *moral* causes, predestined such events.

Few of these men have *died* in peace. Their fortitude has deserted them, when they wanted its support. Their philosophy has vanished, as their strength has abated. The blast of death has demolished their splendid fabrick, and their hopes and peace have *perished* in the ruins.

## L E T T E R XXXVIII.

MY DEAR GIRL,

**T**RAVELLERS, that have made, (what is called) the grand tour, felicitate themselves on their return to England,  
and

and pronounce it the happiest country in the world. And such it certainly is, if not in beauty and deliciousness of climate, yet in that absolute *security* of property it enjoys above all other nations, and that *liberty*, which endears every possession.

If you have made proper observations on the different religious sects, that have passed in review before us, you will feel much the same sentiment, when you compare them with your own church. You will be the *moral* traveller, returned from more unpleasant scenes, to taste the blessings of true repose and dignity at home. Nor is this idea, I hope, the effect of prejudice, but springs from solid reason and conviction.

The Church of England has enough of ceremony and *external* decency to strike the senses, and to support the dignity of religion, in the eyes of the vulgar, and yet nothing that can justly offend the delicacy

licacy of the sublimest understanding. It aims not at the *total* abstraction of dissenters, nor affects the superstitious forms and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. Its piety has a rational, sedate, composed air, and is uniformly grave and decent, without pretending to the flights, the fervours and the visions, of some *modern* fanaticks.

The sacraments are not ridiculously multiplied, nor has *human* policy invented them. They are but two in number, Baptism, and The Lord's Supper; both positively enjoined by Christ, and neither of them supposed to have any further merit, than as they lead to purity of heart and conduct. The *Liturgy* has been admired by the greatest men; the ministers of this church are, in general, an ornament to their sacred profession, and perhaps, on the whole, men of as great learning, candour, piety and moderation, as are to be found under any communion. That  
8 there

there were no *exceptions*, would be a *miracle*. There was a Judas amongst twelve apostles.

After all the *fine spun* theories of liberty, every society must have a mode of government; and that government supposes power to be lodged *some where* for the general good. That of the Church of England is vested in bishops; no one will dispute the *antiquity*, or perhaps the usefulness of the order, whatever he may object to its temporal distinctions. St. Paul appointed bishops in the primitive church.

Much abuse is often levelled against the sacred bench. But the shafts come from *envy*, and are pointed by religious prejudice and resentment. It is, in fact, their *temporal* emoluments, that provoke this ungenerous kind of persecution. But if they must attend *parliament*, they have indeed no *super-abundant* provision. Whilst it is thought expedient



expedient to have a *national* church, the interests of it, as connected with the state, must frequently be a subject of parliamentary discussion; and it would be very extraordinary indeed, if they, who are most *immediately* concerned, should not have the liberty of giving their opinion and *votes* on the occasion. Whatever *equal* right, from education or abilities, the bishops may possess, along with the *temporal* peers of the realm, to deliver their sentiments on any *other* subject, they exercise it very *rarely*, and with great *discretion*. Their honours too, it should be observed, usually come late in life, and the hope of attaining them, at some *distant* period, is, doubtless, amongst the younger clergy, a strong incentive to emulation.

But prejudice apart, the bishops, in general, perform their sacred duties, with great decorum, and the present bench can boast the names of several, who, without

without the aid of purple, would be an ornament to human nature.

To suppose the Church of England without defects, would be supposing it not an *human* establishment. But innovation, in religious systems, is a *dangerous* experiment. Projects of a reformation in our liturgy and articles have come from very suspicious quarters, and worn no very promising appearance. The little errors of this church are better trusted to the enlightened prudence and *moderation* of its governours, than the rash and daring spirit of adventurers, who, under the pretence of only attempting to remove its rubbish, might artfully undermine the very *foundation* on which it rests. They, who have talked most loudly on the subject of an alteration, have certainly displayed no very great attachment to the *essentials* of our holy faith.

We might, perhaps, borrow from *sectaries*, without any inconvenience,  
a little

a little more *zeal*, fervour and animation. If our *internal* discipline, like theirs, was more rigidly enforced, and if, like them, we had a few more conferences with our people, and an opportunity of keeping the unworthy from the altar, we should be so much nearer the model of perfection.

But alas! the *great* evil amongst us, is a want of *encouragement*. The church, at any rate, has but a small pittance. A learned prelate\* has observed, that, if all its dignities, (bishopricks included,) were annulled, and their produce thrown into one common, equalizing fund, for the *general* support, the amount of annual salary, to every *individual*, would not exceed £ 120, or at most, £ 150.

Under such circumstances, who can be very animated? Or what energy can attend the exercise of our profession in

\* The B—p of L—d—ff.

the eyes of a world, that superciliously appreciates the characters of men infinitely more by their temporal possessions, than by the graces of their heart, or the sublimity of their understanding. To a person of any refinement or sensibility, houses without conveniences, and children, without provision, are but a melancholy portion! If *merchants* or *lawyers* had no better prospects, what would be *their* exertions? And yet, under all this heavy load of embarrassment, what great (and good men do our annals boast?

*Funaticks*, indeed, alledge, that pastors should be superior to all hopes of reward, except in heaven. Plato has likewise said, that we should be raised above the sense of pain. But neither those visionaries, nor this philosopher, have been able to change the nature of things; to take from nerves, their sensibility; from the world, its insolence, from education, its delicacy, or from poverty, its stings.

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And we have learned from an *higher* authority, than either of theirs, that “the christian labourer is worthy of his hire, and that he who serves at the altar, should *live* of the altar.”

## LETTER XXXIX.

**B**OOKS and rules of all kinds are the *theory* of religion, and can have no further use, than as they lead to *practice*. We have *then* profited by systems and opinions, when our life is a continual *comment* on what we have read, and we make the light of our example shine before men.

Christianity has but two, capital features; love to God, evidenced in acts of piety; and good will towards man, exemplified in all the possibilities of doing

good. As devotion, however necessary, can bring no profit to our Maker, any more than a little taper can add to the splendours of the sun, the scriptures have laid the greatest stress on charity to our *fellow-creatures*. This is called the “end of the commandment;” it is the *embodying* of our piety; and the world could not subsist without it. Human life is full of woe. Charity is the *angel*, that binds up the sores of our fellow-creatures, heals the broken in heart, clothes the naked, and feeds the hungry. The poor are made the representatives of Christ; whatever we give to *them* is, in scripture language, bestowed on the *Saviour*. Moth and rust corrupt the treasures we hoard up, but this is placed in those funds of heaven, which never fail.

The Saviour has said, that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” And the pleasures, which spring from charity, prove its origin to be divine. What value has an heap of money, or what  
conscious

conscious dignity do we derive from it, if it is not employed in giving comfort to the miserable, and protection to the distressed?

The very *poor* are provided for by the laws of the kingdom. And *common* beggars are far from being the most deserving objects. Charity should rather seek out the modest and uncomplaining, who have seen better days, and have all the pains of a delicate sensibility annexed to their distress.

True charity does not so much consist in multiplying little alms to a number of poor people, as in making some grand and well-direct efforts in favour of a few. Educating one child of an over-burdened family is a greater act of beneficence, than *retailing* to them, occasionally, a thousand, *petty* benefactions. It is not a few, scattered drops of rain, but it is a generous shower, coming all at once, which revives the parched earth, and quickens vegetation.

It is amazing what charities even a *small* fortune will enable people to perform, if under the influence of a christian oeconomy. A few retrenchments from dress, vanity or pleasure, poured into the christian stock, will make it rich indeed.

I do not know a better practice, than that of the primitive christians—laying by, on the first day of the week, a little pittance for this purpose. These drops will not be missed from the general reservoir, and yet, *collectively*, will rain a shower of blessings on many indigent and distressed.

#### LETTER XL.

**Y**OUNG ladies have many methods of charity besides the mere act of giving money. That time, which sometimes

hangs



hangs heavy on their hands, might be usefully employed in making garments for the naked, or providing cordials for the sick. Such an active benevolence would likewise be an excellent recipe for their health and spirits; it would dignify their character, and, when the *last* moment came, gratitude would “shew the garments, which a Dorcas had made,” and the good name “they had acquired, “would be infinitely richer, and more “precious than ointment.”

If I wished a woman to be *universally* charming, I would recommend this expedient. Compassion is the highest excellence of your sex, and charity is the sacred root from which it springs. The soft bosom of a woman, throbbing with sympathy, or her eye glistening with chrystal drops of pity, are some of the finest touches in nature’s pencil. The whole train of accomplishments, the whole group of graces do not exalt her half so much in the estimation of the worthy, the

amiable and the discerning. Alas! when death comes, what will be all the accomplishments and graces? But *charity* shall never fail; its pleasures *then* are gaining their meridian of perfection. Remember what the scripture has said, "alms-giving delivereth from death, and will not suffer us to come into darkness." The young lady you have so frequently heard me mention, as standing high in my esteem, is very eminently distinguished by this grace. Nature has been sufficiently kind to her *person*; but it is not her sweet complexion, it is not her flowing, unartificial ringlets, it is not the *softness* of her voice and manner, or the *mild* lustre of her eyes, that would have called forth a panegyrick from my pen, or touched a breast, that is considerably petrified with philosophy and reflexion. It is a conviction that she lives in the constant exercise of *piety*; that her excellencies are chiefly those of the *mind*,  
and

and that her benevolence is bounded only by creation.

When others are at plays or assemblies, *her* fair hands are making garments for the naked, or restoratives for the sick. The ingenuity, which some of her sister females employ to adorn *themselves*, is consecrated by *her* to the service of the poor.

This is laying up in store against the day of necessity. This is weaving for herself a chaplet of laurels, that shall be green in age. Her countenance shall smile even in dissolution. A beauteous ruin, "even in death she shall have power to charm;" and the gratitude of some admiring bard shall collect her scattered merits into an urn, that shall long secure the precious relicks from the ravages of time.

But I will not add another touch to the portrait, for fear of discovering the excellent original. I should wound that soft and delicate timidity, which is, in

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my

my idea, the *enamel* of her graces. Her true merit wishes to be *unknown*. It is satisfied with its *own*, and the approbation of its *God*.

# LETTER XII.

**A**LMs, however, to the *body*, which must very soon perish, are but, if I may so say, the *threshold* of charity. The true *sublime* of it is compassion to the soul; because that is immortal, and can never die.

Every effort to save *this*, is exalted in its nature, and the nearest approach we can make, in these houses of clay, to the ministry of angels, to the attributes of Jehovah, and to the unbounded compassion of him, who died for the sins of all.

A few,



A few, timely advices, instructions or reproofs to those, over whom our fortune or station give us any influence, may have more lasting and beneficial consequences, than all the food or raiment, or money we can possibly bestow; at least when we give our temporal things, they should be perfumed with *spiritual*, "with words, "thus spoken in due season."

The institution of Sunday Schools promises the happiest consequences to the poor, and the community at large. It has, indeed, *already* produced a surprising reformation. The present age beholds the dawn of a blessed morning, which, in another, may brighten into a more perfect day.

If it *fails*, it will be from carelessness and indolence in the *parents* themselves, or for want of attention from the *higher* orders of people. Many, who will give their money, are not equally liberal of their exertion. This grand scheme, however, requires an unremitting labour and

vigilance. It is the watchful eye of *superiors*, which alone will produce exemplariness in the teachers, or, in the scholars, emulation. And I do not know a greater charity within the sphere of a young lady, than to visit the girls in these useful seminaries, in order to correct their foibles, encourage their dawning virtues, and stimulate them to improvement. Close, uncomfortable rooms, it is true, in *cellars* or *garrets*, poisoned with unpleasant smells, and but filled with *poor children*, are no very inviting objects to those, who live in houses, "cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion." But the merit of the action, is, doubtless, in proportion to its unpleasantness; and it is done for him, who, on *our* account, refused neither hardship nor distress. These poor children, he has vouchsafed to call "his lambs," and it is a most christian effort to "feed them."

Such advice will, doubtless, sound very strange in the ears of some young ladies, who

who dare “scarcely set their feet upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness.” But this, alas! is a false and over-acted refinement. They were not born merely to vegetate, like tulips, for *ostentation*. The world, their friends, the poor, religion, have claims upon them. All nature, sun, moon, stars, tides, preach up the necessity of continual *action*; and I will venture to say, that this kind of exertion would be recompensed with such a secret pleasure, as they never found in the gayest circles of fashion, or the most crowded haunts of dissipation.

*Another* excellent mode of charity, is dispersing little, religious tracts amongst your poor neighbours. These, with the blessing of God, may have a wonderful effect, and indeed be doing most extensive good, when you are no more. Every family of servants should have a small, christian library; the benefits, I doubt not, would soon be felt in their *orderly* deportment.

The

The Society for promoting christian knowledge abounds with a variety of little, plain, useful treatises, that are suited to all occasions. You may easily procure a catalogue of the whole, and *select* such as are most adapted to the state of your particular dependents.

On the whole, my dear girl, that time, which tarnisheth the glory of all human things, will quickly lay both you and me, in the dust of the earth. Let us endeavour to extend this little span by amiable actions, and, if possible, render our memories immortal.

#### LETTER XLII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

**T**HE very first thing I should recommend after religious duties, as absolutely essential to your private comfort,  
is



is *self-government* in the fullest sense of the word. This may be supposed to be included under the article of religion. And so in fact it is. But there are many well-disposed people, that seem to think little things of this kind almost beneath their notice, though in reality they are interwoven with the repose of every day, and almost every moment.

The discipline of the *imagination* is the first thing to be attempted. This, in young people, is naturally warm; and if they are not cautious, will be apt to mislead them into very dangerous errors.

Thus whatever captivates their *fancy*, they take, without examination, to be all over excellence. Tinsel, because it *glitters* more, will be preferred to solid *gold*; a luxuriant, florid style in a writer, to the soundest and best arranged arguments; the shewy and brilliant in *characters*, to the truly valuable, and the gaudy in *dress*, to that artless simplicity, which is the offspring of an elegant and well cultivated taste.

Young

Young people, almost universally, subject themselves to this kind of *illusion*. They enter upon life as an *enchanted* country. The world, in *their* idea, has no caprice; fortune, no vicissitude; friendship is without insincerity; attachment, without bitters, and marriage is all happiness without alloy. What the scripture has called a *wilderness*, they make a *paradise*, whose landships are deliciously picturesque, and whose spring is ever green.

Experience, be assured, will not realize such high expectations. You will find, that every object has its imperfections; that the world at best is but a mixture of good and ill, and that the lights of the picture will be interspersed with shades.

You will ask, where is the great harm of indulging for a little while, these high colourings of fancy? The inconvenience is obvious. It will expose you to perpetual disappointments, and disappointments will create disgust. By such a *false* sublimation, you will have no relish for the  
*rational*

*rational* pleasures, and no resolution to perform the *solid* duties, of your condition. At any rate, you will want a proper share of fortitude and patience to encounter the many unavoidable *ills* and calamities of life.

## L E T T E R XLIII.

**T**HE *next*, most important thing is the government of your *temper*. I know many persons, that would not, for the world, be absent from the sacrament, or refuse to do a generous action, yet indulge themselves, seemingly without remorse, in such little instances of ill-nature, peevishness, tyranny, and caprice towards their servants and inferiors, as render their houses a perpetual scene of discord, and hang, on every countenance, an uncomfortable gloom.

Such

Such people should consider, that religion was intended to regulate the most *ordinary* actions of our lives; that prayers, sacraments, and opportunities of doing *great* good, come, comparatively, but seldom; but that it is, every moment, in our power to diffuse happiness amongst our domesticks, and that this, if it proceeds from *proper* motives, will be an acceptable service to the God, who has appointed all the different ranks in society, and is the father of all compassion. Nor have we much imbibed the true spirit of the gospel, if it has not taught us to bear patiently the imperfections of our fellow-creatures, and to temper authority with gentleness and good nature.

No *consequence* can justify one single act of *caprice*, fullness or ill-humour. It is a direct violation of that *universal* law of charity, which requires us, in all our actions, to keep in view, the happiness of *others*, as well as our *own*.

Tyranny



Tyranny is a downright insult to any creature formed in the image of God; it would be unpardonable, if exercised even to a worm or insect, and generally proceeds from causes, which reflect no honour on the heart or understanding. It is often the result of a *new-born* greatness, that has not yet learned how to bear superiority; of a spleen, collected from want of employment, or a *natural* ill-temper, that never has submitted to the discipline of virtue.

*Mildness* is necessary to *our own* comfort. They, who are continually tormenting *others*, must be wretched *themselves*. It is essential to the dignity of our *own* character; and it is, I am sure, the highest *policy*, whether we mean to secure the *affections*, or the good *services* of our dependents.

It is a pitiful condescension in a woman of fortune to aggravate every little cause of complaint. A ruffled, angry, scolding woman, is so far *vulgar* and disgusting,

gusting, and, for the moment, a sort of *virago*.

*Moderation* is the great secret of government. To be always dissatisfied, is the way to lose all authority and respect. The consequence of those people is most cheerfully acknowledged, who seem the least forward to assert it.

And what says the law of all wisdom and of all perfection? "Masters, give  
" unto your servants, that which is just  
" and equal, knowing that ye also have a  
" master in heaven. Put on, as the elect  
" of God, bowels of mercies, kindness,  
" humbleness of mind, long suffering,  
" forbearing one another, and forgiving  
" one another. Learn of me, for I am  
" meek and lowly in heart. Be pitiful,  
" be courteous."

If the gospel was published "to bring  
" peace on earth, and good-will towards  
" men," this kind affection should *begin*  
with families, which, *collectively*, compose  
all the nations of the world.

LETTER

## LETTER XLIV.

THE piety, I have recommended, will make you always happy in yourself, and respected by all the worthy and discerning, though you should happen to have none of those *intellectual* endowments, which procure a greater share of fame and *admiration*. But you may be *sensible*, as well as *pious*; you may be *entertaining*, as well as *good*. Your reason and understanding were given you to be *improved*; a *proper* pursuit of knowledge, at the same time, will aid and inflame your *piety*, and render you much more valuable and interesting to all your acquaintance. When the *foundation* is laid in virtue, the *superstructure* may have every graceful embellishment.

Knowledge

Knowledge will recommend you to many, over whom *mere* piety would have no power. It will give a greater energy to your *goodness*. The picture will be *thus* elegantly framed, and placed in the best point of view.

*Learned* women, however, have been often a proverb of reproach, feared by their own sex, and disliked by ours. A neglect of their person, and of family concerns, as of little things beneath a *superior understanding*; a vain ostentation of their abilities in *company*, and upon *all* occasions, a supercilious contempt of their sister women in general, and an ungraceful avidity for the company of men, have been reckoned amongst their distinguishing characteristics.

The truth is, some females have been *viragos* in their knowledge, not only injudicious in the *kind* they have aspired to, but the *use* they have made of it, and an *indiscriminate stigma* has been fixed upon



upon all, who have endeavoured *rationaly* to improve their understandings.

On the other hand, it is said of women, that they are so ignorant, frivolous and insipid, as to be unfit for friendship, society or conversation; that they are unable to amuse, entertain or edify a lonely hour, much more to bless or grace that connexion, for which they were principally formed.

What, my dear girl, can a *judicious* woman do, in such a dilemma? How must she act to avoid the imputation of pedantry on the one hand, and ignorance on the other.

There is a narrow, *middle* path betwixt these extremes. Judgment must point it out, and good sense direct you in the execution.

The prominent excellencies of your minds are taste and imagination, and your knowledge should be of a kind which *assimilates* with these faculties. Politicks, philosophy, mathematicks or metaphysics

sicks are not *your* province. Machiavel, Newton, Euclid, Malebranche, or Locke would lie with a very ill grace in your closets. They would render you *unwomanly* indeed. They would damp that vivacity and destroy that disengaged ease and *softness*, which are the very *essence* of your graces.

The *elegant* studies are, more immediately, *your* department. They do not require so much time, abstraction or comprehensiveness of mind; they bring no wrinkles, and they will give a polish to your manners, and such a liberal expansion to your understanding, as every *rational* creature should endeavour to attain.

Whilst *men*, with solid judgment and a superior *vigour* are to combine ideas, to discriminate, and examine a subject to the bottom, *you* are to give it all its *brilliancy* and all its charms. *They* provide the furniture; *you* dispose it with propriety.

priety. *They* build the house; *you* are to fancy, and to ornament the *ceiling*.

Cultivate, then, such studies, as lie within the region of sentiment and taste. Let your knowledge be *feminine*, as well as your person. And let it glow *within* you, rather than sparkle upon others about you. A diamond, so polished, will always be valued. You will charm all, but the ignorant and vulgar. You will be a rational, entertaining companion, and the symmetry of your features will derive a double lustre from the beauties of your mind.

## L E T T E R XLV.

**E**NDEAVOUR to acquire a taste for the beauties of fine writing, as it is displayed in our present, numerous list of English classicks, the Spectators, Tatlers, the Guardian, the Rambler, the Adven-

turer, the World, &c. I have placed Addison at the *head* of this catalogue, because he, more frequently than any of the rest, gives lessons of morality and prudence to your sex, and, for delicacy of sentiment, is peculiarly adapted to female reading. There is sometimes, perhaps, a *languor* in his papers. He may not have all that fire and energy and pathos, which have since characterized some celebrated writers; but for ease, gracefulness, simplicity and nature, he is absolutely without a rival, and, perhaps, *ever will* be without a superior. A critick \* of modern times has said, that whoever would write the English language with ease, should spend his days and nights in reading the works of Addison.

To this frequent perusal of the best writers, add, if possible, an acquaintance with some *living* characters of improved education. *Conversation* with people of genius and sentiment is the easiest and

\* Dr. Johnson.



quickest way to improvement. It gives us all its graces, without its austerities; its depth, without its wrinkles. We soon grow languid and gloomy with *abstracted* studies, weary of ourselves, and sated with our pursuits. Conversation gently *agitates* the sedentary frame, and gives a brisker motion to the blood and spirits. The countenance is flushed with pleasure; the eyes sparkle, and the heart expands and glows with emulation.

## LETTER XLVI

**T**o write *letters* well is a very desirable excellence in a woman. Every situation, character, connexion; devotion, friendship, love, business, *all* require the exercise of this talent. It is an office particularly suited to the liveliness of your fancy, and the sensibility of your heart; and your sex, in general, much excels our

I 2                      own,

own, in the *ease* and graces of epistolary correspondence. Not cramped with the shackles and formality of rules, their thoughts are expressed *spontaneously*, as they flow, and become, more immediately, (what a letter always *should* be,) a lively, amusing, *written* conversation. A *man* attends to the niceties of grammar, or well turned periods; a *woman* gives us the effusions of her soul. The first may please a few, languid criticks; the latter will delight every person of sensibility and discernment.

I had once the honour of corresponding with a lady, whose letters astonished me. Imagery, taste, pathos, spirit, fire and ease, vied with each other, which should be the most *conspicuous* feature in the productions of her pen. They came not from the *head*; it was the *heart*, which wrote them. They were not faultless, but they were impassioned. They had defects, but they had likewise beauties, which must have warmed the coldest  
critick,

critick, that ever existed. They were interesting to an high degree, and left this conviction strongly on my mind, that we often *labour* only to be dull, and, in the search of *distant* ornaments, chill the natural fervours of the soul.

## LETTER XLVII.

**W**ITH the history of your *own* country you cannot decently be unacquainted. It would betray an unpardonable ignorance, if you could not tell, on being asked in company, the general character of all the sovereigns that have sat upon the British throne; what were the religion, manners, customs, ceremonies of the primitive inhabitants of the island; by what means the present state of civilization has been gradually introduced; what

contributed to bring about our reformation from the Church of Rome; at what period the outline of our happy constitution first began to be sketched out, and what is the particular excellence of our government, over all others in the known world.

If indeed you consider history in its proper light, not as a mere detail of names, facts, epochs, and events, but as a picture of human nature, and of the wonderful administration of Providence, apportioning rewards and punishments to nations, and frequently to individuals, according to their actions, it will become not only an entertaining study, but a source of the sublimest, *moral* improvement. It will give you the richest knowledge of men and things; from what *has* happened, you may deduce what *will*, in similar situations; and you will learn to adore the wisdom, justice and perfections of him, who, under all the changes of time, falls of empire, the conflicts of passion, and the



the interests of man, is the same "yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" carrying on, amidst all *apparent* disorder, one grand and comprehensive scheme of happiness and probation.

Goldsmith has agreeably abridged and condensed the English history, in a well-known work, of two small volumes, intitled "Letters from a Nobleman to his Son." If your curiosity is excited to pursue this study on a larger scale, Hume will give you every thing that delights in genius, language, colouring and description.

He is by no means, an *impartial* historian, but he is a very splendid, captivating writer. If he is not dispassionate, he is always enchanting; and, if he does not uniformly convince, he never fails to charm.

It had been happy for this writer, if he had never attempted any thing but *history*. He might then have gone to his grave with unequivocal applause. But in his

moral and metaphysical works, he is an enemy to the dearest interests of mankind. He has endeavoured to sap the foundations of that religion, which is the only source of every hope and every comfort. His cold and *sullen* scepticism has done infinite mischief. It more than sullies all the lustre of his literary fame.

## LETTER XLVIII.

**R**OBERTSON'S "History of Charles the Fifth," and of "Mary Queen of Scots," will both instruct and entertain you. The historiographer has been esteemed an excellent writer. But I have always, in private, thought his style too laboured and stately. It has not the ease and simplicity of the ancients. It does not equal several of the moderns. It has neither the concise energy of Hume, nor the

the more flowing and easy graces of Gibbon.

The late Dr. Stuart, in a very elegant work, has controverted almost all the assertions of his predecessor, concerning Mary, and become the champion of this unfortunate queen. But *you* have nothing to do with literary controversy. Leave them to the tribunal of an impartial publick. *Time* will weigh their separate merits in the balance of truth. Either or both of them will exercise your taste, and improve your understanding.

Stretch's "Beauties of History" will furnish you with many short, agreeable anecdotes, both ancient and modern, at a very small expence of time and trouble. Knowledge thus *epitomized*, is what I should recommend. On such subjects, you want short and pithy sketches, rather than laboured and prolix dissertations.

The history of Greece and Rome is so frequently alluded to, so connected with that of almost all other nations, and so

full of curious incidents and anecdotes, that a little knowledge of it would be very useful and entertaining. But, in general, the writers on the subject, are too voluminous for a *female*. They make up no little share of the labour, in a classical education. Goldsmith has likewise given his assistance to epitomize this branch of history. I know no other writer so proper for your purpose.

To obtain just a *glimpse* of general history, the most useful work I recollect, is the Abbé Millot's "*Elementes sur l'Histoire.*" On *his* comprehensive and condensed plan, there is much in a little compass. By travelling over a few fields, you gain a most immense and extended horizon, and many tracts of *hitherto* undiscovered country. History at large is so voluminous and complicated, that, to a young lady, who should understand, as it were, but the *outline*, it very much wants such a mode of abridgement, and *simplification*.

LETTER



## LETTER XLIX.

MY DEAR LUCY,

ROLLIN'S "Ancient History" is a treasure to young people, if the number of volumes does not alarm you. This man was one of the most excellent preceptors, that the world ever saw. It was his ambition to *unite* the scholar, and the christian. He labours to promote religious improvement by every incident he relates. He holds forth Providence, as continually superintending the government of the universe, and its finger, as directing all the *movements* of the system; and, when he has related a number of surprising vicissitudes and events, he takes his pupil up "to an high mountain, from whence he shews him all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glories of them," to be continually under the

controul and direction of heaven, and not *collectively* to possess half the lustre or the excellence of one, pious disposition.

Under the pen of this most christian writer, every *baser* metal is purified from its alloy. Every founding action is divested of its *bombast*, and traced to its *real* source. Splendour has no dignity, if unassociated with *virtue*. Ambition is painted as a *fury*, that destroys. Heroism is represented, as *murder* in disguise. The laurels of an Alexander are wrested from his brow. Cæsar is stripped of his fictitious plumage. They are both described, as vultures, preying on their species, who were born to be only the *scourges* of humanity, and a terror to the world.

This man deserves *universal* veneration. His pupils should have raised a monument to his memory, and posterity have rendered that monument, *immortal*. Learning and religion should be grouped over his tomb, mingling their united tears for the loss of his virtues.

If

If you have not leisure to peruse his writings, yet be careful to read all *other* history with *this* view, and it will lead you to God. It will teach you, no longer, to be dazzled with grandeur, because grandeur fades away. It will shew you, that vices have demolished the mightiest empires, and swept the finest cities "with the besom of destruction." It will convince you, that every thing on earth is a shadow, and that neither men nor nations "continue in one stay." It will assure you, that, "though clouds and darkness may be about the throne of God, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat." It will instruct you, that *every* action is "weighed in its balance;" that, however, *seemingly*, disregarded for a *time*, vice and virtue will have their just proportion of punishment or reward, and that nothing but *religion* will be able to triumph, amidst the crush of elements, of matter, and the world.

LETTER

## LETTER L.

MY DEAR LUCY,

THOUGH I think every woman in the world should execrate the memory of the late Lord Chesterfield, as having written the most scandalous libels on her sex, yet his sketches of heathen mythology, of Grecian, Roman, and British history, in the first volume of his letters, are well worth your attention. If this ingenious nobleman had given us more specimens of *this* nature, and fewer lectures on *the graces* and *intrigue*, the gratitude of posterity would have *imbalmed* his ashes. He was certainly possessed of an elegant style, and had a very happy method of conveying his instructions.

But in order to make any real improvement in this, or any *other* of your studies,



let me advise you to read only one half hour, at a time, and to employ a *double* space, in abridging and expressing what you recollect, in your *own* language. This will have the double advantage of impressing it very strongly on your memory, and enabling you to form a style of your own.

Though a good style is, doubtless, a mark of genius, and not attainable by every person, yet it depends amazingly on *mechanical* habit, as well as our gait, countenance, or gesture. The pen, accustomed to a certain routine of period, performs it as insensibly, as the memory retraces all the variations of notes in a song, whilst, perhaps, we are, silently, occupied with some other object.

Be so kind as to indulge me with a sight of these sheets exactly as they are penned from your *first* impressions, and I will endeavour to correct them. Banish the *childish* fear of betraying any ignorance, where I cannot expect you to be informed;

informed; and, if some, essential alterations should be made, remember it is the pen of friendship which erases, guided by that affection, with which I have the honour to be,

Your ever faithful

and affectionate.

#### LETTER LI.

**T**HAT species of history, which describes the lives and characters of particular persons, and is included under the name of biography, is by far the most useful and interesting to a woman. Instead of wars, sieges, victories, or great achievements, which are not so much within the province of a female, it presents those

those *domestick* anecdotes and events, which come more forcibly home to her bosom and her curiosity.

I have always thought that one great advantage of boys over girls, is their having the most illustrious characters of antiquity to form their sentiments, and fire their emulation. Biography will open to you the *same* source of improvement. You will read of persons, elevated with every noble sentiment and virtue; and your judgment and taste will select some particular favourite from the group, as a model for your imitation.

Though Johnson has been so very much celebrated in the republick of letters for *all* his productions, yet I have always thought his "Lives of the Poets" by far his most agreeable performance. It has not that turgid pomposity of style, which appears in some of his more juvenile labours; it is, all along, interspersed with judicious sentiments and moral reflections; it abounds with an original vein of criticism,

criticism, and anecdotes of so many illustrious men, as cannot fail to amuse, as well as to instruct. His criticisms, it is true, have been controverted, and traduced; but what writings of merit are exempt from such a tax? The enthusiastick admirers of Milton, in particular, have handled him with severity. But who does not know, that favourites, at *any* rate, will be defended?

But indeed all men of sense *unite* in paying a sincere tribute of respect to the memory of Johnson. In spite of all his petty and *ungenerous* biographers, the sneers of party malice, or the still sharper arrows of insidious *friends*, he stands an huge colossus, in the bosom of an ocean, unmoved with the angry dashing of its waves.

Johnson in all his multiplied productions, has not a single period, that can patronize indecency, or unhinge belief. And, though, *now*, it signifies but little to this extraordinary man, that he was considered



sidered as an oracle of knowledge in his day, as an ornament to his country, and a blessing to the world, it must transport him to recollect, that he has carefully endeavoured to diffuse happiness, as widely as his writings, and to render piety diffusive as his fame. The death of the author will exempt me from suspicions of flattery or design in this little panegyrick. Gratitude may be allowed to offer, without any censure, this little incense to his venerable shade.

If all the *private* anecdotes of every person's life and temper must be arraigned before the tribunal of the publick, who could escape? If Johnson *was* unaccommodating, rough and morose, let it be remembered, that these were but little *pimples* on a *skin*, where the *heart* glowed with universal benevolence; let it be considered, that conflicts, disappointments, and misfortunes, are unfriendly to sweetness of manners or disposition; that severe application has a tendency to render any man  
irritable

irritable and peevish; that gaiety and sprightliness *considerably* arise from an ease of circumstances; and let us oppose to these, a piety, that was profound and warm, almost to *superstition*, and unwearyed labours for the service of mankind, which scarcely knew a moment's interruption.

## LETTER LII.

SULLY's "Memoirs," in five volumes, are interspersed with very curious and interesting anecdotes; and "The Private Life of Louis XV." is a very entertaining work. Indeed the French particularly shine in biographical writing. It is quite in *their* province, and forms a part of the *national* taste. Their imagination sparkles, in an especial manner, in painting the complexion

complexion of courts, monarchs, or personages of distinction. *They* feel as great an ardour for extolling the virtues of their *le Roi* and his attendants, as *we* do for recording all the great achievements of the field or ocean.

The Marquis Caraccioli is universally known, as an author of great vivacity and talents. He has written the life of Pope Clement XIV. and it does honour to his pen, as well as to the memory of the sovereign pontiff.

If the Marquis really wrote the letters, which go under the name of Ganganelli, he has hit off, with a wonderful address, the air and features of the illustrious original. The habits, sentiments, manners and disposition of the pope, as couched in this life, all breathe through these letters.

The name of Dr. Johnson, and the intimacy known to have subsisted betwixt the parties, have given a great currency to Mrs. Piozzi's anecdotes, relating to this literary hero. But they have not  
*immortalized*

*immortalized* either her talents, or the goodness of her heart. They are a most disgusting specimen of treachery in friendship; a copious effusion of *spleen*, that had *long* been collecting. They remind one forcibly of a number of little insects, nibbling at their ease, on the *carcase* of some noble animal, that a *single* motion of the *living* creature would have dispersed in an instant, or crushed into atoms.

## LETTER LIII.

**W**RAXALL is a very agreeable author, and he has chosen a fruitful, happy subject, in his "Memoirs of the Kings of France, of the House of Valois." The execution is not inferior to the judiciousness of the design. His book has an admirer in every person of sentiment and taste.

The



The late Mr. Sheridan is allowed to have possessed considerable abilities. He has given the world a specimen of them in his "Life of Swift." It is, however, in my idea, too flattering a portrait. The painter was a countryman, and an admirer. No talents can convert deformity into beauty, or make darkness to be light.

Swift was a very great, original genius; but the indecency of some of his writings is intolerable; his spleen, excessive, and his behaviour to Stella an *eternal* stigma on his memory and his virtues. Ever dabbling in the turbid ocean of politicks, what business had he with the quiet and retired haven of the church? But genius and talents can embellish any side of a subject, and the biographer has poured, on his favourite author, a deluge of panegyrick.

The "Life of Garrick" is so much interspersed with the *domestick* history, and the most illustrious persons of his time, that it will highly engage and gratify  
your

your curiosity. It is written by Davies, in two volumes.

England has long laboured with a disorder, that I cannot call by a better name, than the *theatrical mania*. A principal actor is more distinguished, caressed, and enriched by a luxurious nation, than many of the most deserving persons in the learned professions. An Abingdon, a Siddons, and a Mara (as once a Garrick, a Henderson, and a Yates,) inchant the feelings of a British audience, drain the money which should be sacred to better purposes, acquire, in a few years, an independent fortune, and are admitted to the first circles in the kingdom; whilst a thousand amiable and meritorious clergymen are suffered to live in want, and to die in the most uncomfortable obscurity. This is not a very favourable trait in the *moral* history of a nation. It seems rather a symptom of its approaching dissolution.

Hume

Hume was a great champion of infidelity, and as such, a character, that excites uncommon curiosity. He has written his own life, and, as an unique in biography, it is worth your reading.

Bolingbroke was another of the *sceptical* family. His history is agreeably recorded by Dr. Goldsmith.

On the subject of biography, you will meet with a great variety of other, entertaining writers; but I must not close this article, without particularly recommending a book, that has given me so much pleasure and information, as the life and writings of Gray, by Mr. Mason.

A particular friendship of the warmest and most disinterested kind, subsisted betwixt these celebrated authors. It commenced in that early period of life, when souls are incapable of guile or selfishness, and mutually *expand*; and Mason has endeavoured to immortalize it in a

manner, which does equal credit to his heart and understanding.

The history of a retired, literary person cannot, generally, present much variety of entertainment. But, in the character of Gray, there is somewhat very *interesting*; and his friend has displayed it to the greatest advantage. No man, perhaps, by such *slight* sketches, as the author of an Elegy in a country church-yard has left behind him, ever acquired so extensive a reputation. And there was a dignity, a softness, and a delicacy in his *whole* manner of thinking and acting, which compensate for the want of more remarkable anecdotes, and of more sound-  
ing connexions.

LETTER



## LETTER LIV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

“THERE is not (says a sensible writer,) a son or daughter of Adam, who has not some concern in the knowledge of Geography.” It is necessary to your understanding the connexion, which this globe has with the other planetary system, and with all the wonderful works of God. It is indispensable to your comprehending history, or having a proper idea of the events and transactions it relates, as well as to divest your mind of little, narrow prejudices by giving you a view of the customs, manners, ceremonies and institutions of all the different nations over the world.

A celebrated writer\* has called geography and chronology, the two eyes of

\* Lord Chesterfield.

history; the first informs you *where* events happened, and the latter, at what particular *period*; if it was not for these helps your reading would be a confused chaos, without order, light or perspicuity.

Geography is, indeed, so much attended to at all schools, that there is little occasion to dwell on its necessity; if you have learned the use of the globes, and the division of it by names, which are only *fancied* for the sake of reducing the immensity of it to the narrow scale of human comprehension, the best method, I know, is never to read the name of a place in a common news-paper, or any other history, without immediately recurring to authorities for the situation and division of the country, in which it lies, the manners of the inhabitants, their ceremonies, civil government, and religious institutions. It is this mode of studying from the *urgency* of the occasion, which gives energy to our researches and vigour to improvement.

Guthrie

Guthrie is one of the best authors in geography; and for chronology, the tables of Dr. Priestley (a name, which I would only mention, where science and not *religion*, is concerned,) are so compendious and comprehensive, as to afford you, on a single glance, considerable information. There is no species of knowledge, that is so easily attained, as that of geography; nor any, of which the want is more flagrant and awkward.

I lately blushed for a young lady, who was asked in company, the latitude and situation of a particular place, which happened to be mentioned in the publick papers of the day. She was dressed in the highest taste. The roses and carnations vied in her countenance. She piques herself on her smartness and vivacity; but, in this instance, could make no reply. Her *embarrassment* betrayed her ignorance, and *politeness* relieved it by a change of conversation.

How much higher would her character have stood in the estimation of all sensible and discerning men, if she had come down stairs, dressed in an elegant plainness, and, instead of standing so long before her glass, had devoted some little share of her time to this species of improvement. Not that I have any objection to a blush upon a woman's cheek. I think the crimson tint ornamental; but I would have *yours* to be the blush of *delicacy* and *reserve*, not of *ignorance*, *shyness*, or *ill-breeding*.

## LETTER LV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

NATURAL history is another study, which I conceive to be particularly *feminine*. It has, of late, been cultivated with



with uncommon attention. Botany has been, particularly, fashionable. It has found a place in the amusements of the elegant, as well as the learned. Nothing is more calculated to amuse the mind, improve the health and spirits, and to inspire at once chearfulness and devotion.

The surprizing history of plants and flowers, the immense variety, the mechanism, order, government and economy of animals, fowls with their plumage and fishes with their scales, fossils, minerals, petrefactions, mountains, vallies, volcanos, all nature full of life, full of happiness and full of miracles, will crowd your mind with the sublimest images, and teach you to adore the great, almighty former and preserver of the world. What beauty in each flower! What traits of divine wisdom and goodness in an insect! Surveyed with a truly philosophical eye, the whole creation is a temple! Not a shrub, but is eloquent, not an animalcule, but it is a powerful monitor of virtue!

I never spend an afternoon with Miss Louisa ——— without being both instructed and delighted. I never take a walk with her in the garden, but she unfolds a thousand, natural curiosities, which had hitherto escaped my unscinded or inattentive eyes. I never ramble with her into the fields, but she gives me such an history of the most common plants and flowers, as at once surprizes my curiosity, and gratifies my taste. In her closet she has a large collection of insects, which her microscope clothes with most exquisite beauty, and a museum, filled with shells, corals, and petrefactions, the sparkling of which is exceeded by nothing, but the vivacity of her eyes, or the stronger and more permanent lustre of her virtues.

I would infinitely rather have her taste, than her fortune. And I never quit her without secretly envying her enjoyments. She is ever sprightly, because she has never a moment *unemployed*. She always  
*smiles,*

*smiles*, because she is always innocent. Her pleasures are of the rational and *refined* kind. They never leave a thorn in the heart, or pluck one, blushing rose from her cheeks. How solid and how calm, if compared with the midnight revels of fashion, or the giddiness of admiration!

Be like Louisa, my dear girl, and you will always be happy. Study nature, till it leads you up to nature's God. Pore on plants and flowers, till they perfume you with a *real* devotion; and I will engage you to become, in your turn, one of the most beautiful flowers in the creation.

## LETTER LVI.

NATURAL history is divided into three grand parts, as it respects the animal, the mineral, and the vegetable kingdoms,

and under these different articles, assumes the name of zoology, or an history of animals; lithology, or a description of stones, fossils, &c. and botany, or an account of herbs, plants, flowers. These again have, each, their respective subdivisions.

Linnaeus, who was born at Upsal, is the great father of this science, and from the Swedish schools have issued the works of the most eminent masters. But he is too voluminous and scientifick for a female, who wants only a *general* knowledge of nature, and not to penetrate the minutiae of her plan.

The *Amenitates Academicæ* are a number of ingenious essays on a variety of subjects, selected from the works of the most capital disciples of the Linnæan school. Some of these have been translated by Stillingfleet, under the name of "Tracts on Natural History," and are very valuable and instructive; others by Brand, in two volumes, which contain a  
number



number of very curious and entertaining descriptions.

Pulteney's "View of the Works of Linnæus" you may read, likewise, with great pleasure and improvement. Next to these I should recommend to a mere English reader, the works of Ray: him, who wrote "The Wisdom of God in the Creation." They are highly useful and valuable, though written before this study had arrived to its present state of perfection.

Goldsmith's "History of the Earth and animated Nature" is but a mere compilation. Still it may have its use, as affording some *collateral* lights and instruction.

Buffon is an author of first rate abilities. His style is splendid; his knowledge is extensive, and his eloquence, in a high degree, brilliant and seducing. But I cannot recommend him for many reasons. He is too *voluminous*; the extensiveness of his plan leads him into a great

variety of detail, and of *indelicat*e descriptions. He is more attached to systems of his own, than the discovery of truth; and he is a sort of *sceptick*, who resolves every thing into a chain of *secondary* causes, and *sacrilegiously* excludes the Deity from his creation. This temper is the *bane* of *modern* philosophers. They endeavour to account for *every* thing upon *natural* principles, and wherever they are puzzled, ridiculously disbelieve. Instead of making their knowledge, a scaffolding to God, they build on it, a monument to their own vanity and folly, which will not stand, "when winds and storms arise." Do people of such distinguished abilities need to be reminded, that a world without design, or an active machine, without a *first*, moving principle, involves the greatest and most palpable of contradictions? Nature, in the hands of a *true* philosopher, reads a continual lesson of piety; in those of a *false* one, it is the parent of scepticism, gloom and despair.

Sir

"Sir Isaac Newton was the most pious of men; many of his *bumble* followers have been as impious *retailers* of infidelity.

You will derive great pleasure and improvement from all the writings of Mr. Pennant, and they are numerous. Always lively and always authentick, they entertain the man of taste, the scholar, and the antiquarian, as well as the naturalist. Few persons have published so much, in any one department of science, with so great success.

The "Flora Londinensis" of Curtis is a splendid work, that does credit to the author. It is embellished with beautiful engravings of all the common plants and flowers of this country, and is still in continuation.

Volcanos are amongst the *prodigies* of nature, which fill the mind with the grandest and sublimest images. Hamilton's account of them, and Raspe on the volcanos in Germany, will astonish your imagination. You may add to the list

Swam-

Swammerdam's "History of Insects," translated by Floyd, and revised by Dr. Hill.

But I will desist, for if I was to give you only the *names* of writers on the subject, they would fill a volume. No private fortune would be sufficient to purchase them, and the perusal would require more time, than would consist with your other, various engagements.

#### LETTER LVII.

**W**HEN you have viewed the wonders of nature in *miniature*, astronomy will shew them in the *sublime*. Telescopes will present you with a most stupendous view of the heavens; suns, piled on suns; worlds, on worlds; and the great Creator, presiding over all, in the majesty of perfection.



fection. You will be lost and *absorbed* in the magnificent contemplation. You will feel yourself as nothing before God, and confess him to be all in all.

A real astronomer must be *pious*, or insensible. However some have thought *revelation* partial, the language of these *orbs* is certainly *universal*. "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world." The sentiment they proclaim, is majesty to God; to man, humility, self-abasement, devotion.

Nicholson's "Introduction to Natural Philosophy," in two volumes, octavo, is an excellent book upon this subject; and Derham's "Astro-theology" must elevate the mind, and improve the heart of every reader. Gregory's "Astronomy," and Huygens's "Celestial Worlds discovered," are very useful and entertaining, and may together form a sufficient library for this department of science. Perhaps I should have added Ray's "Wisdom of God,"  
in

in the Creation." They, who declaim against knowledge, in a woman, have not surely considered how much *this*, and many *other* branches of it, are connected with all the sublime and pious affections.

## LETTER LVIII.

POETRY, I do not wish you to cultivate, further than to possess a *relish* for its beauties. Verses, if not excellent, are execrable indeed. The Muses live upon a *mount*, and there is no enjoying any of their favours, unless you can climb to the heights of Parnassus.

Besides a passion for poetry is dangerous to a woman. It heightens her natural sensibility to an extravagant degree, and frequently inspires such a romantick turn of mind, as is utterly inconsistent with all the solid duties and proprieties of life.

To

To increase the number of *imaginary*, when life abounds with such *real* sorrows, by nursing a sickly, extravagant sensibility, is, in a rational creature, the very height of imprudence. The ancients endeavoured to cherish fortitude, and resolution, by giving strength to the body and vigour to the mind. From some of their states, poetry, amongst other things, was absolutely *excluded*, as tending to *enervate* the minds of a people, and unfit them for the struggles and activities of life; and it is certain that the owners of an exquisite sensibility, for a few *moments* of pleasure, have *days* of vexation. In this human wilderness, *thorns* are perennials. *Roses* are but the *perishable* ornaments of summer.

The late Mr. Shenstone, amongst many others, is an unhappy instance of the misfortune, I have mentioned. His works, though not of the *first* magnitude, are exceedingly agreeable; but his poetical enthusiasm was a source of *perpetual* irritation



tation and misfortune. Having cultivated his taste, more than his prudence, his feelings, more than his fortitude, and his imagination, more than his judgment, his life was one, unvaried train of inquietudes. His mind was ruffled with *imaginary* injuries; his peace disturbed with *fanciful* affronts, and his disordered finances left him every thing, but comfort, dignity, and independence.

With a fortune, that only justified a neat and *homely* dwelling, his genius was not content with less, than the superb appendages of a palace. In forming the *Leaseowes*, he sacrificed to enthusiasm, what he owed to contentment. He panted for a *paradise*, and a paradise he had; but it soon became a wilderness of thorns. Merciless creditors had no candour for the poet, and made no allowance for the exquisiteness of his taste. They saw no charms in shrubs, in blossoms, or in prospects, and they awoke him with an iron grasp, from his delicious intrancement.

HOLST

Whilst



Whilst a noble neighbour, emulating and outvying, on a *larger* scale, the beauties of his elysium, or exhibiting it to a stranger, from an unfavourable point of view, inflicted on his sickly feelings, an heart-felt affliction, which he had neither the possibility of avoiding, nor the philosophy to support.

## LETTER LIX.

**T**HOUGH I do not wish you to become a poet, it is, however, necessary, that you should not be wholly unacquainted with the writings of many, inimitable bards. They will certainly refine your taste, and spread a very elegant repast for your private amusement.

Shakespeare is, perhaps, the first genius of the world; and some of his dramatick works,

works, whilst they astonish, will give you an useful fund of historical information.

The immortal poem of "Paradise Lost" should not only be in the *hands*, but graven on the *heart*, of every woman, because Milton, above all other authors, describes the distinguishing graces of the sex, and in his Eve, has exhibited an exquisite pattern of female perfection. On *this* subject, his feelings were always awakened in an extraordinary manner; his imagination glowed, and he has given it the finest touches of his pencil.

Milton, like all great men, was fully sensible of the blessings we derive from the society of women, and how *cheerless* the face of nature would have been without them. He, therefore, *labours* to make the mother of his Paradise every thing, that could charm, and every thing, that could alleviate the infelicities of life. Let the libertine read his description of marriage, and tell me what he thinks of the

the prevailing rage for impurity and seduction.

Homer is universally celebrated; and, though you cannot read his poem in the original language, Pope has given an admirable translation. The same may be said of Dryden's Virgil, if you wish to taste the exquisite richness of these ancient authors.

Mason's poems have great merit, and have acquired him a considerable celebrity. His "Caractacus," his "Elfrida," and his "English Garden," have all been admired. Nothing however, from his pen, has pleased me more, than the epitaph upon his lady. His talents seem to be particularly formed for the pensive and pathetick. But poetry, after all, is but an *embellishment*, and, in the character of a *divine*, a very secondary distinction. How much more important and useful to mankind, are the labours of that pastor, who, by one judicious, impassioned, and well-directed discourse, appalls the sinner, encourages

encourages the faint, revives the drooping, guides the perplexed, or condescends to cheer the bed of sickness with divine consolations!

This remark, however, is not particularly intended to depreciate the ingenious author of "Caractacus." He is said to excel likewise, as a preacher.

## LETTER LX.

**I**N poetry, the *ladies* have, of late, asserted their claim to genius, and the trampled honours of their understanding. Several of them appear, in the walks of Parnassus, with considerable lustre.

Miss Seward, in my idea, is a star of the first magnitude in the hemisphere of imagination. She has given us chiefly little, fugitive pieces; a monody on the death of captain Cook, and major André;

a poem



a poem to the memory of lady Miller, and a few stanzas to Mr. Wright, on taking her father's picture. The last always gave me the highest pleasure. It required indeed no great effort, but is a most pleasing specimen of filial affection, and of a rich, fervid, glowing imagination. Her "Louisa," though her largest, is not, in my idea, her *happiest* performance. A novel is too much dignified by the charms of poetry. It is a courtesan, dressed like a queen.

Whenever Miss Hannah More takes up her pen, she never loses sight of piety and virtue. Her "Bleeding Rock," "Search after Happiness," "Sir Eldred of the Bower," "Sacred Dramas," &c. will please and instruct you. The little tract, lately published, entitled, "Thoughts on the Manners of the Great," which has had so very extensive a circulation, is said to have come from her ingenious pen. The design is excellent, and the execution displays a considerable knowledge of human

man

man life and manners. I wish it may leave some lasting impressions. But alas! the dissipated have few intervals for reflection.

Miss Williams bids fair for a poetick laurel, that shall long be green. Her "Peru" is a work of considerable merit.

The little sonnets of Mrs. Charlotte Smith are soft, pensive, sentimental, and pathetick, as a woman's productions should be. The muses, if I mistake not, will, in time, raise her to a considerable eminence. She has, *as yet*, stepped forth only in little things, with a diffidence that is characteristick of real genius in its *first* attempts. Her next, publick entrè may be more in style, and more consequential.

The Comtesse le Genlis I have before mentioned, as a woman of a fine taste, and a cultivated understanding. Her "*Theatre sur l'Education*," as founded on a *dramatick* plan, may be recommended amongst other poetical productions. There is not a sweeter rose in the garden of *nature*, than her's of Salency.

Lord Lyttleton was not, by any means, a capital poet. There is, however, such a delicacy, softness, piety, and tender pathos in his strains, as do the highest credit to his *own* heart, and must improve that of every attentive reader. His monody upon his Lucy has immortalized his sensibility, his affection, and his virtue.

Akenfide's work on the "Pleasures of Imagination," needs no other recommendation, than what it has received from a generous and a discerning publick. It is highly interesting; it required a very considerable effort, and his genius has rendered it beautifully picturesque.

Cowper's poems are calculated to do considerable service. He has made the muses hand-maids to religion. He has chosen verses, only as a vehicle for conveying instructions of so important a nature, as would not, by any means, have dishonoured the pulpit. His style is simple, bold, manly, spirited and energe-



tick; his judgment, strong and penetrating; his metaphors, forcible and happily conceived; his observations on life and manners, accurate; and his satire, just and poignant.

He does not seem so much to have studied the production of a poem, with unity for its design, and harmony in all its parts, as to serve the cause of piety and virtue by general, *desultory* and impassioned reflexions. His work on the whole, is a strong specimen of genius and talents; rigid criticism, perhaps, would say, that his piety wants a little mildness, and seems to breathe the spirit of a party.

But the most finished poet of the age is Hayley. His "Essay on History" and on "Epick Poetry," his "Ode to Howard," and his "Triumphs of Temper," have received very great and very general applause.

LETTER



## LETTER LXI.

**Y**OUR question is a very proper one, and I will give you the best satisfaction in my power.

Pronunciation, or that part of grammar, called *Orthoepy*, as to any uncommon or difficult words, is governed by the quantity, which those words have in the *original* language, from which they are derived. As you cannot be supposed to understand the *dead* languages, you will of course, frequently, be at a loss how to pronounce many words with propriety. The only method is recourse to a dictionary, and the best, in my opinion, are those of Sheridan and Johnson. Pronunciation, however, is a very fluctuating thing; and though there certainly is a standard of propriety, over which mere fashion *ought* to have no power, yet I should always recommend a con-

formity to the manner of the politest people you may happen to converse with, rather than a pedantick affectation of grammatical strictness. The latter would be thought a *conceited* ostentation of knowledge, which, in a young lady, would not be forgiven.

The allusions to Jupiter, Pallas, Venus, the Graces, the Muses, Helicon, Parnassus, which have so much puzzled you in the poets you have lately read, will be fully explained in Tooke's "Pantheon, or History of the Heathen Gods." The *general* fact is, that before the knowledge of the true God dawned on their minds, these poor, ignorant heathens never dreamed of *one* omnipotent, all-sufficient, all-pervading spirit, which the scriptures have revealed, and described, as possessed of all possible perfections. They, therefore, formed to themselves a *multiplicity* of gods, and attributed to one of them in particular, with a *specifick* name, every great quality or superior excellence, that appeared

appeared beyond the ability of *mortals*. These deities they arranged into different classes, according to their supposed degrees of pre-eminence; and fancied some of them to inhabit the heavens, and others, the woods, groves, rivers, springs, mountains, &c.

You will be amused with their fanciful opinions; and if you think aright, you will learn to bless the Almighty, on your knees, for having cast *your* lot in an age and country, where the gospel has dispersed these mists and errors, dignified our views and nature beyond all expression, and given us the clearest knowledge of our duty. You will feel the force and propriety of that clause in our liturgy, "We bless thee for our creation, " preservation, and all the blessings of this " life; but above all, for thine inestimable " love in the redemption of the world by " our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means " of grace, and for the hope of glory."



## LETTER LXII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

A LITTLE taste for the fine arts of painting, sculpture, architecture will be of singular use. It will render every excursion you make, and every curiosity you behold, exceedingly delightful, and enable you to become entertaining to all, with whom you converse.

A person, thus accomplished, surveys an elegant pile of building, the designs of a Palladio, the landscapes of a Claude Lorrain, the portraits of a Titian, or the transfiguration of a Raphael, with uncommon rapture, and can entertain herself, for *hours*, with a ruin or a castle, in which the unskilful can see nothing but deformity, or the corrosions of time.

Writers



Writers on Sculpture and Architecture are not numerous, and I am wading beyond my depth, when I attempt to recommend them. Winkleman's "Reflexions on the Sculpture of the Greeks," Evelyn's "Parallel of ancient and modern Architecture," and Morris's "Lectures" may give you *some* ideas on the subject.

On the art of *painting*, more has been written; yet without a natural genius for it, and some previous instructions from a *master*, I do not know, whether you will be able to make any great proficiency.

Webb's "Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting" is a very learned, elegant, ingenious work, and interesting, in an high degree, even to those, who are, by no means, to be ranked amongst the *cognoscenti*. The quotations from Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Boileau, Moliere, Racine, Tasso, Ariosto and Metastasio are not only well contrived to *illustrate* the subject, but to delight every

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person.

person of reading and taste; whilst the picturesque imagery and splendid language would stamp a value on any production.

I remember to have been charmed, some years ago, with reading a small work, intitled "An Essay on Prints and Picturesque Beauty." I do not recollect, whether it bore the name of any author; but it struck me, as a very interesting and valuable performance. Genius and knowledge were wonderfully united, and embellished the whole.

Ferguson's "Art of Drawing in Perspective," I conceive to be useful, as an *elementary* work. "An Essay on Landscape" may be considered in the same light; and you will be instructed and delighted, at the same time, with Hayley's two epistles to Romney, and Fresnoy's "Art of Painting," translated by Mason. This last mentioned author is said to excel in the three sister arts of painting, poetry and musick. In the two first, he has given the *world* specimens

specimens of his skill; with the latter, he is said frequently to entertain the circle of his private friends.

But the best place for gratifying your curiosity, and I should think, for improving your taste in paintings, is the annual exhibition of them, at Somerset house. The metropolis, amidst all its variety of invention, does not furnish, in my idea, a more elegant, or a more improving amusement. We see, with pride, some artists of our own country, vying with the most celebrated masters of antiquity. Under the hands of a Reynolds, a Wright, a West, and many others, the English canvas glows with inimitable beauty. A Raphael, a Titian, a Correggio, a Rubens, a Poussin, or a Salvator Rosa seem, in some degree, transplanted to the British isle.

A stranger indeed is, at first sight, so much dazzled, with the splendour and elegance of the company about him, that, in the charms of *living* beauty,



he is tempted to overlook the efforts of the pencil. In no other place, that I ever saw or recollect, do art and nature so powerfully combine to bewitch the senses, and captivate the imagination.

If my time and place of residence were at my own command, I should frequently, in the season, devote to this pleasure, one of those languid, afternoon hours, when the spirits are exhausted with the employments of the morning, and want renewed vigour, elasticity, and animation.

I am much interested, believe me, in the relish I would give you for this species of improvement. I look forward, with a degree of pleasure, to the time, when I may be the companion of your little tours, and delighted with your observations; when we may hang, in curiosity, over fossils and petrefactions; when we shall pore over paintings, buildings, ruins with all the luxury of artists, and in such rational, innocent pleasures  
\*  
endeavour



endeavour to forget the sorrows, that will crowd on this *variegated* life.

## LETTER LXIII.

IT is so very agreeable to peruse voyages and travels into *foreign* countries by way of coming easily at a knowledge of their history, customs, ceremonies and degrees of civilization, that I do not wonder at the number and multiplicity of these productions. Authors wish to be *read*, and this is the sort of work, which, if judiciously executed, suits every taste. It has a tendency to enlarge the mind, and divest it of illiberal prejudices. Books of this kind are now become so numerous, that the difficulty only is, how to make the selection.

I will begin with Moore, for he has pleased universally. Your collection will be graced by his "View of Society and

Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany," in two volumes; and his "View of Society in Italy," in two more.

Wraxall is another writer in this way, who has superior merit. He has published a tour through the northern parts of Europe, and through France.

Pennant has been singularly happy in all his attempts. He interests the antiquarian, the scholar, and the man of genius in his various productions. His works are numerous. A "Tour through Scotland," "Voyages to the Hebrides," a "Tour in North Wales," a "Journey to Snowdon," and "Journey from Chester to London," &c.

Switzerland is one of those *romantick* countries, that delights us in idea. Coxe has given sketches of it, in a very pleasing and picturesque manner.

Sherlock's "English Traveller" is a very original and entertaining book. The author is evidently a man of fancy and genius, but rather fulsome in his panegyrics

ricks on particular characters, and eccentric both in his sentiments and manner. He will, sometimes, make you smile with egotisms and the appearance of conceit; but he will likewise enlighten your understanding.

Cordiner's "Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland" is an entertaining work. The plates, annexed to it, please the eye, and invigorate the imagination.

A tour to the lakes is become very fashionable, and is said abundantly to repay the traveller's curiosity. West's description of them may be useful, though the language appears too florid and poetical.

The "Tour to Ermenonville" I have never seen; but it is mentioned as possessing considerable merit. Gilpin's "Description of the River Wye" abounds with beautiful scenery, and is a most lively and entertaining production.

But the catalogue would be endless. A thousand other books of this kind,  
are



are at hand, whenever you are disposed to travel with them in your *closet*.

If you have a little knowledge of Heraldry, it will be an *embellishment*; an agreeable exercise of your taste and ingenuity, and may, occasionally, suggest a channel, through which you may serve a valuable friend. The only books, I recollect, are the Elements of it, by Porney; Gwillim, a large folio, and Edmondson's Complete Body of it, in two volumes.

But after all this recommendation of different studies, do not mistake me. I do not want to make you a fine writer, an historian, a naturalist, a geographer, an astronomer, a poet, a painter, a connoisseur, or a virtuoso of any kind. But I would have you to possess such a *general* knowledge, as will usefully and innocently fill up your leisure hours, raise your taste above fantastick levities, render you an agreeable friend and acquaintance, qualify you for the solid duties



duties of your station, whatever they may be, and elevate, above all, your soul to him, who is the source of *all* knowledge, greatness and perfection.

## LETTER LXIV.

**T**HE accomplishments of a woman may be comprized under some, or all of the following articles; needle-work, embroidery, &c. drawing, musick, dancing, dress, politeness, &c.

To wield the needle with advantage, so as to unite the useful and beautiful, is her *particular* province, and a sort of ingenuity, which shews her in the most amiable and attracting point of view. Solomon describes his excellent daughter, as employed in the labours of the distaff, or the needle. Homer paints his lovely matrons as engaged in such domestick avocations. Andromachè is thus relieving  
her

her solitude, when she is surprized into transport, by the unexpected return of Hector from the war.

The heart glows with pleasure, when we read the accounts of the good, Roman matrons in the purer and unvitiated ages of their republick. The greatest men, princes, warriors, senators and philosophers were clothed in the labours of their wives and daughters. Industry, in this happy period, was esteemed a virtue, and it was not beneath a woman of the first quality or understanding to be an excellent oeconomist, who "looked well to the ways of her household."

Employment is the grand preservative of health and innocence. When we have nothing to do, we immediately become a *burden* to ourselves; the mind and body languish for want of exercise, and we fall into a thousand dangerous temptations.

LETTER

## LETTER LXV.

**I**F you have any *natural* taste for drawing, I should wish you to indulge it. I think it an accomplishment, very well adapted both to the taste and delicacy of your sex. It will agreeably exercise your ingenuity and invention. It will teach you to discover a superior finish in all the varied landscapes and scenery of nature; to survey the works of our distinguished masters, with an higher relish, and a more poignant curiosity; and it will heighten all the innocent pleasures of your retirement. When nature howls with winds, or is covered with snow, you will be able, in a moment, to call a *fancy spring* upon the canvas, of which the blossoms will be ever fragrant, and the trees ever green. You may thus have birds, always on the spray, and larks, apparently, thrilling out praise to their bountiful Creator.

LETTER



## LETTER LXVI.

**M**USICK, by which I mean playing on an instrument, or *occasionally* singing, is a very desirable acquisition in any woman, who has time and money enough to devote to the purpose, for it requires no inconsiderable portion of *both*. It will enable you to entertain your friends; to confer pleasure upon *others*, must increase your *own* happiness, and it will inspire tranquillity, and harmonize your mind and spirits, in many of those *ruffled* or *lonely* hours, which, in almost every situation, will be your lot.

The passions of mankind, however, have very much debased and *profaned* this art, which, like others, was *originally* sacred, and intended to chant the praises of the Almighty. Many songs are couched in such *indelicate* language, and convey



convey such a train of *luscious* ideas, as are only calculated to soil the purity of a *youthful* mind. I should therefore recommend, (if I may so express myself,) rather the *sacred*, than the *profane*, of this study. Indeed church musick is, in itself, more delightful, than any other. What can be superior to some passages of Judas Maccabæus, or the Messiah? There is not, perhaps, an higher amongst the *melancholy* pleasures, than a funeral dirge.

Dancing, in a degree, is professedly an essential part of a good education, as correcting any *awkwardness* of gesture, giving an easy and *graceful* motion to the body, and if practised *early*, perhaps even in *directing* its growth. Modern manners, however, have carried the fondness for this accomplishment to an *immoderate* extreme. A passion for making the best figure in a minuet, is vastly beneath the dignity of a woman's understanding. And I am not sure, whether *excelling* in this

this particular, does not inspire too great a fondness for dissipating pleasures, and proportionably abate the ardour for more retired virtues. A woman, who can sparkle and engage the admiration of every beholder, at a birth-night or a ball, is not always content with the graver office of managing a family, or the still and sober innocence of domestick scenes. Besides dancing is not, at *certain* moments, without its temptations. An elegant, illuminated room, brilliant company, the enchanting powers of musick, admiring eyes, obsequious beaus, attitude, &c. are apt to transport the mind a little beyond the rational medium of *gentle* agitation.

I would not, however, be a *cynical* moralist, that would abridge you of any harmless amusement. I have only my apprehensions for your innocence, for indeed it is a plant of a very delicate complexion. And you will *then* have attained the *perfection* of your character, when you can mix a passion for these  
elegant

elegant accomplishments, with a turn for solid and domestick virtue; when you can, one night, be distinguished at a ball, and the next, want no other entertainment, than what the shade, your family, a well chosen book or an agreeable walk are able to afford. I should wish you to be *innocent*, and, if *possible*, accomplished at the *same time*; but, at *any* rate, I would have you *innocent*, because otherwise you cannot be happy.

## LETTER LXVII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

**W**ILL you bear with my impertinence, if I attempt to give you my directions on a subject, where your sex are allowed to possess infinitely more taste and judgment than our own—that of dress. I offer, however, my plain and undisguised sentiments, only for your advantage; and I am sure you will receive them



them with that candour and indulgence, to which my friendship for you has an indisputable claim.

*Neatness*, you cannot cultivate with too much attention. I would press it on every female, as strongly, if possible, as Lord Chesterfield did the *graces* on his son. The want of it is unpardonable in a *man*, but in a *woman*, it is *shocking*. It disgusts all her friends and intimates, has estranged the affections of many an husband, and made him seek that satisfaction abroad, which he found not at home.

Some ladies, who were remarkably attentive to their persons *before* marriage, neglect them *afterwards*, in an egregious manner. They cannot pay a worse compliment to their own delicacy, or to their husbands. If they conceived some efforts necessary to *gain* the prize, more, I am sure, are required to preserve it.

It is the opinion of (I believe,) Rochefoucault, that nice observer of life and manners, that the affection of woman  
*increases*



*increases* after marriage, whilst that of man is apt to *decline*. Whatever be the *cause*, a prudent woman will, at least, use every method in her power, to guard against so *mortifying* a change. Neatness, however, is *easily* practised, and will always have considerable weight.

In the eyes of *servants* and domesticks, indeed, a woman loses her consequence and authority by a neglect of her person. She will not be obeyed with *cheerfulness*, and she will become an object of *ridicule*, in all their private parties and conversations. If inferiors must be subject, they will pay an *unconstrained* homage only to a person, who attracts by *propriety*, the estimation of the world.

Neatness is the *natural* garb of a well ordered mind, and has a near alliance with *purity* of heart. Law has said of his Miranda, that she was always clean *without*, because she was always pure *within*. And Richardson, whose taste was as exquisite, as his imagination glowing,

ing, has painted his Clarissa, as always dressed, before she came down stairs, for any company, that might break in upon her, during the whole day.

*Finery* is seldom graceful. The easy undress of a morning often pleases more, than the most elaborate and costly ornaments. I need not say of how much time and money they rob us, which are sacred to virtue and to the poor, nor how soon this very *embellished* body will be dust and ashes. The perfection of the art is conveyed in *two* words; an *elegant simplicity*.

Ladies are certainly injudicious in employing so many *male* friseurs about their persons. The custom is indelicate; it is contrary to *cleanliness*, and all their manoeuvres cannot equal the beauty of natural, easy ringlets, untortured and unadorned.

The nearer you approach to the *masculine* in your apparel, the further you will recede from the *appropriate* graces and  
*softness*

*softness* of your sex. Addison, in his day, lashed, with a delicate vein of *irony*, this absurd *transformation*. The present age wants such an inimitable censor. The riding habits, particularly, that have been so fashionable, and even made their appearance at all public places, conceal every thing that is attractive in a woman's person, her figure, her manner, and her graces. They wholly *unsex* her, and give her the unpleasing air of an Amazon, or a virago. Who likes the idea? or if you would be more struck with the *absurdity*, tell me what you would think of *petite maitres* in muffs? You immediately despise the ridiculousness of the one; we daily *feel* the *unnaturalness* of the other. We forget that you are *women* in *such a garb*, and we forget to love.

Every publick paper one opens, is a violation of your delicacy and an insult to your understanding. Powders, perfumes, pomatums, cosmeticks, essence of roses, Olympian dew, artificial eyes, teeth,



hair advertised for your advantage, would be an heavy stigma, if some kind and *well disposed* persons amongst *our own sex*, were not willing to share with you, a part of the burden. Blush, my dear girl, at such unseemly practices. Be content to be, what God and nature *intended* you: appear in your true colours; abhor any thing, like *deceit*, in your *appearance*, as well as your character. What must all sensible men think of a woman, who has a room, filled with a thousand preparations and mixtures to *deceive* him? What money, what time must be given to this *odious*, insufferable vanity! Under such *unnatural* management, how different must be the female of the *evening* and the *morning*! What must we think of marriage, dressing-rooms and toilets! What an opening for expostulation, coldnesses, aversions! If an "elegant simplicity" be the *perfection* of dress, this is surely, as far as possible, removed from perfection. It is not *simplicity*; it is not *elegant*.



It would be cruel to add any thing to the punishment of the *men*, who can have recourse to such *effeminate* artifices. They have *already* the scorn and ridicule of one sex, and the stern contempt and indignation of the other. They are poor, amphibious animals, that the best naturalists know not, under what class to arrange.

*Painting* is indecent, offensive, *criminal*. It hastens the approach of wrinkles; it destroys constitutions, and defaces the image of your maker.

Would you think of giving the last touch to the pieces of a Poussin, or a Salvator Rosa? Believe for a moment, that the Almighty is, at least, as great in *his* way, as either of these artists.

Let the martyrs of fashion, luxury and dissipation, who turn night into day, have recourse to this filthy and abominable practice. Let them seek a resource from the rebukes of their conscience in gaiety and noise. But let the fairness of *your* complexion

complexion be only that of *nature*, and let your *rouge* be the crimson blush of health, arising from temperance, regularity, exercise and air.

That beauty, truly blent, whose red and white,  
Nature's own sweet, and cunning hand laid on.

Such *simplicity* will recommend you to God; and, if you retain any fears of offending him, how dare you deface his image, in your countenance, by *artificial* decorations? Such innocence will charm, when paint is dissolved. It will call up a bloom, and cast a fragrance even on the latest winter of your age.

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END OF VOLUME FIRST.